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LIGUORIAN

I Worry about Past Sins

Are You Influenced by Human Respect?

Purity and Impurity in Marriage

Teen-agers and School



YOU SHALL KNOW THE TRUTH,

AND THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE.

JUNE, 1957



THE Liguorian

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THE LIGUORIAN

LIGUORI, MO.

PURITY AND IMPURITY IN MARRIAGE

Questions are often asked about the meaning of chastity in marriage. This answer to such questions is intended only for the married and for those about to be married.

DONALD F. MILLER, C.SS.R.

MANY married people and many of those preparing for marriage, have strange and confused ideas about the relation between the virtue of chastity and the state of marriage. Indeed, but slight experience with the problems of the married reveals that there are two possible extremes of opinion, both wrong, in this important matter.

On the one hand there are those who erroneously think that there is something wrong or sinful or shameful about the proper use and enjoyment of the faculty of sex within marriage. On the other hand there are those who erroneously think that getting married removes all limitations

on the use of sex, and therefore all obligations to practice the virtue of chastity.

In view of these two wrong notions about sex and marriage and chastity, this simple, frank, forthright Christian instruction, intended only for the married and for those about to be married, is presented. It will have two major parts. First, it will state what is lawful and virtuous, with regard to sex, in the state of marriage. Second, it will set down what is unlawful, regarding sex, in the state of marriage and therefore in some way contrary to the virtue of chastity.

I. WHAT IS LAWFUL IN MARRIAGE

IT cannot be repeated too often (because married individuals are constantly being met who state that they never realized or were taught this basic truth), that marriage is essentially a contract between a man and woman, sacramentalized for His followers by Jesus Christ, whereby

they deliver to each other the right over their bodies for the actions that are necessary for the procreation of children.

This is the very essence of the contract of marriage, and anyone who does not realize it or is not willing to accept it, is not ready for the state of marriage. It was implicit in the words of Adam, the first man and the first husband, when he said about Eve, the first woman whom God gave him as a wife: "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh . . . wherefore a man shall leave father and mother and shall cleave to his wife: and they shall be two in one flesh." (Genesis, 2:23-24). It was spelled out more clearly by St. Paul, in the following famous passage concerning the obligations of husbands and wives:

"It is good for a man not to touch a woman. But for fear of fornication, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. Let the husband render to the wife her due, and likewise the wife to her husband. The wife has not authority over her body, but the husband; the husband likewise has not authority over his body, but the wife. Do not deprive each other, except perhaps by consent, for a time, that you may give yourselves to prayer; and return together again lest Satan tempt you because you lack self-control." (1st Corinthians, 7:2-6)

SEVERAL simple conclusions can be set down as following upon this basic principle about the essence of marriage.

1. It is lawful, virtuous and meritorious for husband and wife to take part in the privilege of marriage, according to the wishes of each other; and whatever actions promote the mutual pleasure of the essential right of marriage are not sinful so long as its primary purpose of begetting children is not interfered with in any way. Demonstrations of affection outside of the use of the marriage privilege are not sinful as long as no full satisfaction is sought in these.

2. It is lawful and virtuous for husband and wife properly to utilize the privilege granted to each other by the contract of marriage even at times when, by reason of age or known sterility or some other circumstance, it is known that conception will not result. There are two reasons for this conclusion:

First, because the contract made by two people in the act of marrying each other primarily concerns the proper performance of certain actions, and does not demand that they limit these actions only to times when they are certain that the primary natural result will infallibly follow.

Second, because the privilege granted by the contract of marriage has important purposes that are secondary to the primary one of begetting children, and these may be sought even when it is known that the primary purpose will not be fulfilled.

However, the contract involves only the *proper* performance of the actions that have been ordained by God as the ordinary means of procreation.

3. It is lawful and virtuous for husband and wife to abstain from the use of the privilege granted to each other by the contract of marriage for a time or forever, but only *under certain conditions and for certain right motives*.

a. *The conditions*: 1) that it be by free and mutual consent; 2) that it create no grave danger of sin for either one or for both.

b. *The right motives*: 1) that it be done for spiritual motives, for example, to show a special love for God, to practice an especially meritorious form of mortification, to dedicate themselves more perfectly to the service of God; 2) or that it be done for some motive of necessity.

Under the last head a husband and wife may agree to practice complete continence for a period of time, because of the poor health or diseased condition of the wife, or for a similar grave reason.

They may also (always under free mutual agreement and without great danger of sin) practice the periodic continence called rhythm for any of the serious reasons set down by Pope Pius XII as justifying this practice. These reasons are a) economic hardship and necessity; b) illness or physical weakness of the wife, under which head it may be said that ordinarily rhythm is lawful for some time, perhaps a year or so, depending on individual circumstances, after the birth of a child, to permit the wife to regain strength and vigor; c) social reasons, such as overcrowded living conditions that cannot easily or

quickly be improved; d) eugenic reasons, consisting of considerable foreseeable danger of having subnormal or malformed children.

II. WHAT IS UNLAWFUL IN MARRIAGE

FROM the above principles, and from the essential purposes that God has attached to the exercise of the powers of sex, it can readily be seen that there are many sins involving sex into which married people can fall. Some of these sins are primarily against the virtue of chastity, though very often they will involve the violation of other virtues as well; some are primarily against justice, though a wrong attitude toward sex and the contract of marriage is involved; some are primarily against the fifth commandment, even though the motive is a desire to misuse the powers of sex. Thus sins which the married must avoid, under penalty of losing their immortal souls, may be classified under these three heads.

A. Sins against Chastity

The general principle of the natural law is this: chastity forbids all deliberate indulgence in the pleasures associated with sex by the unmarried, and any deliberate indulgence in these pleasures by the married that is outside of or contrary to the good and virtuous use of sex described above for the married. Thus husbands and wives can fail against chastity in several ways.

1. *By self-indulgence*. The pleasures of sex were not given to individuals, but only to husband and wife

together, as incentives and rewards for their accepting the responsibilities of a family. (This is the plan of God. If in an individual case the fulfillment of the marriage contract does not seem to be much of a "reward," that is an exceptional case caused usually by mistaken training and outlook. It does not take away the obligations of marriage.) To seek deliberately to indulge them alone, or to consent to the temptation to self-indulgence, apart from the action designed by God for procreation, is always a mortal sin, not only for the unmarried, but also for the married.

2. *By adultery.* In getting married, an individual man and an individual woman give solely to each other the right to those actions that are designed for procreation and to the kind of love that goes with them. Any making love to another person, or seeking any kind of sex indulgence with another, is not only a grave sin against chastity, but also a sin against justice, a sin against charity (in the form of scandal — cooperating in sin with another), and a sin against fidelity to a solemn promise. Adultery is a vicious attack on marriage, on the home, on the family, as these were set up by the infinite God. This truth may be broken down into very practical rules:

a. It is a mortal sin for a husband or wife to keep steady company with someone other than their spouse, as if they were free to marry that person.

b. Even after separation and legal divorce from a validly married but still living spouse, it is the sin of adul-

tery for a married person to violate chastity with another, and it is the mortal sin of entering a serious occasion of sin without a reason to take up steady company-keeping with another.

c. The contract of marriage includes the solemn agreement to have children only by one's lawful spouse; therefore a wife may never entertain the modern proposal of having children by "artificial insemination" from someone other than her husband, even though her husband were to agree to it. This practice is seriously contrary to the contract of marriage and therefore a mortal sin.

3. *By birth-prevention.* This means deliberately interfering with the natural consequences of the use of the privilege of marriage, either by "withdrawal" or by the use of medical preparations or mechanical gadgets of any kind.

In entering into the contract of marriage, the man and woman involved give to each other only the right to the kind of actions designed by their Creator for the procreation of children. They give no right to each other for such actions as deliberately frustrate and make impotent the privileges of marriage, while the pleasures of marriage are sought. No justifying reason for birth-prevention can ever be found, because it is contrary to the universal natural law.

4. *By the unreasonable use of rhythm.* This is contrary to chastity only by inference: it makes chastity more difficult. Primarily it is contrary to the chief end of marriage. No hard

and fast rules can be laid down to cover all cases in this important matter, because individual circumstances must always enter into the judgment that is made. That is why it is always recommended that one's confessor be consulted when there is any doubt whether one of the reasons set down by Pope Pius XII as justifying rhythm is present.

This can, however, be said with certainty: rhythm is not something that husbands and wives are free to adopt for no particular reason other than that they want to enjoy the freedom and luxury made possible by a small family. Moreover, for a couple with many years of fertility ahead of them to decide that rhythm is going to be their constant way of life is ordinarily to place themselves in a serious occasion of sin, and to eliminate God's primary plan from their marriage.

5. By promoting or cooperating in obscene conversation among their friends. Married people are bound, like everybody else, not to offer occasions of sin, in the form of bad thoughts and desires or in any other form, to their friends and acquaintances. On this point they often fail by taking part in the telling of obscene or sexy stories, making double meaning jests and remarks, discussing unusual sex matters in mixed company, in a way that is bound to stir up concupiscence.

It is no excuse for them to say: "I told obscene stories, but only among married couples." St. Paul said: "Ob-

scenity and uncleanness, let it not be named among you." The privileges of sex are sacred, private and personal; they should never be made the subject-matter of jests and so-called humorous stories.

B. Sins against Justice

There are certain sins of the married, directly against justice, which nevertheless touch on purity in some way. Two such are these:

1. Refusal of husband or wife to carry out the essential contract of marriage. As made clear above, by this contract husband and wife give to each other permanently the right to the actions designed by God for procreation, and secondarily intended to foster love and prevent sins of impurity. In the words of St. Paul, "the wife has not authority over her body, but the husband; the husband likewise has not authority over his body, but the wife."

Therefore, for a wife to refuse, without a serious reason, the serious and reasonable requests of her husband for the use of the privilege of marriage, is to break her contract and violate justice in a grave way. There can be serious reasons for such refusal, as when the husband becomes a drunkard, or fails over a great period of time to support his wife and family, or is guilty of proven adultery. Also, refusal is not sinful when it is truly based on ill-health, danger of scandal, or grave inconvenience. Apart from such justifications, refusal (on the part of either husband or wife) is a sin against justice which at

the same time endangers the purity of the one refused.

2. Failure to instruct children, according to their need, in matters of sex. Children have a right in justice to learn from their parents those Christian truths and principles and facts that are necessary to help them lead chaste lives. Parents have therefore an obligation to read, study and consult about the best ways in which to give such instruction, and to overcome any repugnance they feel about carrying out this duty. If they fail in it, if, at the very least, they do not see to it that some reliable authority instructs their children in matters of sex when instruction is needed, they fail against their duties as parents.

C. Sins against the Fifth Commandment

There are two great sins against the fifth commandment that are associated with a desire to misuse sex, or to separate its pleasures from its divinely established purposes. They are:

1. *Abortion*, and any direct attempt to prevent a conceived child from being born as a living human being.

When a child is conceived, God freely and directly creates a human soul for the child, and entrusts it to the care of the parents. The child has a right to life equally sacred with that of every human being already born. Indeed, the command, "Thou shalt not kill," is given with a very special force to the parents of unborn children.

Therefore, for a wife to take medication of any kind for the purpose of bringing to an end a certain or doubtful pregnancy, or to take special exercises with that purpose in view, or to submit to any kind of operation to end the life of an unborn child, would be a mortal sin. For a husband or anyone else (doctors included) to urge any such action on a wife (or pregnant woman) would also be a mortal sin. This sin is so great that the Church has applied the penalty of excommunication to those who effectively urge, procure, pay for or submit to the crime of abortion.

There is no sin of course, and no penalty of excommunication, for a wife who submits to an operation for cancer or some other grave disease which indirectly results in the loss of an unborn child.

2. *Sterilization*, or any operation directly designed to destroy the power of the sex faculties of an individual to produce new life.

Every human being is bound by the fifth commandment to preserve the substantial, physical integrity of his body. For a wife to ask for or submit to an operation that would make future conception impossible (usually by the ligation of the Fallopian tubes, or unnecessary removal of ovaries or uterus) would be a most grave sin against the fifth commandment. For a husband to ask for or to submit to the kind of operation that would make him sterile (usually called vasectomy) would be an equally terrible sin.

AGAIN it must be remarked that it is not sinful to submit to surgical treatment of a diseased condition of the body that endangers life, even though the treatment indirectly involves sterilization. But it is always a crime to seek to be made sterile for the direct purpose of avoiding the dangers or hazards or responsibilities of parenthood.

NO GARDEN OF ROSES!

When Father William Chaminade read the terms of the oath drawn up by the revolutionists in France, during the year 1794, in which priests were required to swear allegiance to the state and repudiate their lawful superior, the Pope, he tore it into bits and tossed it to the winds. He also made up his mind that he would not leave France, but would work among the people as a tinker, a mender of pots and pans, and thus be able to get into their homes, to baptize, bless marriages, and give the last rites to the dying.

The revolutionary government knew that he had not left France, in fact, knew that he was in Bordeaux. The cry went up, "We must get the priest Chaminade."

One day the soldiers closed in on a certain street where he was reported to be and found only an old tinker with a kettle in one hand and a kit of tools in the other, shouting:

"Pots to mend, kettles to seal."

"Did you see the priest Chaminade pass here?" inquired the soldiers.

"Oh yes," replied the tinker, "Hurry and you may catch him."

He had several narrow escapes. Once a resourceful maid upset a large tub over him, when he had not had time to hide, and even served the soldiers some wine on top of the tub. Of the forty other priests in Bordeaux, twenty went to the guillotine. The immense amount of work Father Chaminade accomplished during this reign of terror is attested by his signature on all kinds of church records of the period. He said Mass in cellars and barns or anywhere it was possible to do so.

Several years later he was exiled to Spain, and here, being a French priest, he had to support himself, by royal decree, so he made and sold little plaster statues of the saints. Before Our Lady of the Pillar he meditated and learned why his life had been spared. He was to help restore Catholicity in France and the world, through the help of Mary Immaculate.

He wrote: "To her is reserved a great victory in our day. Hers is the glory of saving the faith from the shipwreck with which it is threatened."

Father Chaminade's body rests in the Carthusian cemetery in Bordeaux, but his work, commenced in France's reign of terror, flourishes all over the world today, carried on by twenty-five hundred members of the Society of Mary, commonly called Marianists.

Go Ahead, Tell Him!

An author, monopolizing the conversation with talk of his accomplishments, was suddenly conscience-stricken.

"A thousand pardons," he said to a fellow guest. "Here I am talking of nobody but myself. Let's talk about you. What do you think of my new book?"

Problems of Professional People

Service with a Smile

MOST of the tasks performed by working people are directed in some way to the benefit of others. The man who works on the farm or the highways or in the shop or factory produces something that others will use to their advantage — food, clothing, automobiles, typewriters, etc. Those who use these products do not know or care whether the workman scowled or smiled as he toiled; it makes no difference to them as long as the product is properly fashioned. But there are many other working people whose job is to serve others directly and personally — the waiter who puts your dinner before you in the restaurant, the agent who sells you a ticket at the railroad station, the hostess who hands you magazines on the plane, the porter who carries your bag, etc. And the point I wish to make is that these persons should render their services courteously and cheerfully.

The fact is that we do sometimes encounter unpleasant persons in jobs of this kind, persons who treat the patrons or customers in a very surly and sour manner. The bus driver who harshly yells: "Get back to the rear. How do y'expect these people to get on when you're all up in front?" — the taxi driver who accepts your tip without a word of thanks (even though it is generous) — the elevator operator who shouts angrily: "Come on, hurry up, we can't wait all day!" — the train conductor who tells you sarcastically:

"Don't worry; we're only an hour late," when you timidly ask when you will get to your destination. These are examples of people who are spoiling the service they are giving to their fellow men by their lack of common courtesy and kindness. How much more smoothly and happily life would go on if everyone rendered service with a smile, speaking and acting in a considerate and charitable manner!

Of course, we can excuse those who serve others if they are guilty of an occasional manifestation of temper — especially if they have had some unreasonable patrons, such as the lady in the shoe store, who tries on thirty pairs of shoes and then declares that the service is abominable, or the small boy who keeps the waiter waiting fifteen minutes while he decides what he wants for dessert. But I am referring to those servants of the public who are habitually in a bitter mood, however well they are treated. How do they get this way?

Sometimes, I believe, it is due to a feeling of resentment that they have to serve others. They seem to think that this is an insult to their dignity. But they should remember that they depend on the public for their support. If nobody used telephones or rode in buses or ate in restaurants, a great many people would be out of a job.

NOWADAYS, big firms are demanding courtesy on the part of their employees as an absolute condition for holding a job. For example, the air lines will not tolerate a hostess who loses her tem-

per when things do not go according to her likes. These companies realize that politeness on the part of their employees helps business; and the employees realize that they will lose their jobs if they habitually fail in this respect. It is a good move on the part of these business firms, but it is a pity that they have to secure common courtesy by a threat. The good Christian should have a higher motive — the realization that in helping a fellow man in his needs or difficulties he is actually serving Christ, who said: "As long as you did it for one of these, the least of My brethren, you did it for Me" (*Matthew, 25:40*). This conviction will surely help

one to work courteously and cheerfully, when his job involves service for others. And so, if you are a clerk in a store or a waitress in an ice cream parlor or a telephone operator, or any other person obliged by position to serve others, try to be courteous and kind from a supernatural motive — because in those whom you serve you see the image of Christ Himself. Thus, your daily tasks will help you to reach a high place in the kingdom of heaven.

Very Rev. Francis J. Connell,
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A TOAST TO THE CHURCH-WORKER

She never makes a speech about herself, nor does anybody ever make a speech about her. She is never mentioned in the newspapers. No special reference will distinguish her epitaph on the cold tombstone above her grave. If she shall have a word about it she may choose a very simple cross.

Lots of people speak about her — for instance, those whom she asks to buy tickets, those whom she asks to do some sewing or needlework for the next church bazaar, those whom she asks to help along at the parish chicken dinner. But what they say about her would not fit into this toast.

She is never singular, except perhaps in her regular attendance at the sodality meetings, in her frequency at the communion rail, or in her enthusiasm for everything that the pastor decides upon undertaking for the advantage of the parish, church or school.

She is always jolly; able to swallow the most cutting insinuations and to

laugh away the most bitter and insulting remarks (caused, no doubt, by thoughtlessness or unnoticed jealousy).

She is generally wishing that the bazaar were over, so that she might get down to a little work for herself; but then, when the card party comes along immediately, she takes a quick breath, and she comes back as strong as ever.

She's a very ordinary little person, and we wonder how she accomplishes all she does. She asks no reward, and perhaps, in the general rejoicing over the results of the bazaar, she slips away and is forgotten.

She is just the *church-worker*. Sometimes it is a *he*.

But if the stones ever cry out — the stones of the church and the school she helps to build and keep in repair — they will cry out to our sacramental Lord as once the Jews called out to Him concerning His Blessed Mother: "Blessed are the hands that labored for You!"

Mathias Huber, C.S.S.R.

Little Lessons in Catholic Living

An Unknown Devotion

WHEN you pray the Apostles' Creed, which is a statement of the things you believe as a Catholic, you say: "I believe in the Holy Ghost."

Now, while your *belief* in the Holy Ghost, the third of the three persons in one God, may be firm and unhesitating, it might do you much good to ask yourself: "How much love and devotion do I have for God, the Holy Ghost?"

Devotion to the Holy Ghost!

Think for a moment of how little we hear of devotion to the Holy Ghost in comparison with other devotions. Look at the list of your own devotions and see if devotion to the Holy Ghost holds a spot near the top. If someone were to start a crusade or movement in favor of devotion to the Holy Ghost, he might almost be spoken of as starting a *new* devotion. But this devotion to the Holy Ghost is not a new devotion. It would be more correct to say that it is an unknown or unpracticed devotion.

For it is not new. This devotion is over nineteen hundred years old. In

fact it began before the Catholic Church was officially established. After the ascension of Christ into heaven, the Blessed Virgin Mary and the apostles went into the supper room, and there they spent nine days in prayer in preparation for the coming of the Holy Ghost. These nine days of prayer were not only the first novena, but they were also the beginning of public devotion to God, the Holy Ghost.

In our times this devotion is not practiced more widely because we forget how much God, the Holy Ghost, means to us; because we do not appreciate the great benefits we can gain from devotion to the Holy Ghost. It requires only small effort to understand what a grand thing devotion to the Holy Ghost truly is; how important it is to us.

It is true that there are many devotions in the Catholic Church, and nobody can practice devotion to each particular saint. Each one of us can choose only a certain number of these devotions. But devotion to God is not just one of a number of devotions

from which we are free to choose. Devotion to God is devotion itself: the source, the cause, the beginning and end of all other devotions. What would you think of a person who has no devotion to God, the Father; no devotion to His only Son, Christ our Lord? He would be the same as one who does not believe in God at all. Then why should you not think the same of someone who has no devotion to God, the Holy Ghost?

BUT you may say, "There is some difference here. The Holy Ghost seems so cloudy and hazy, it is so hard to form a picture of Him in our mind. Jesus, on the other hand, seems so near to us, so lovable that He naturally attracts our love. Well, if love attracts love, then surely you ought to love the Holy Ghost, for He is the unlimited love which unites God, the Father, to God, the Son in the Blessed Trinity. As for being near you — no one could be nearer or closer to you than the Holy Ghost. For, while you are in the state of grace, the Holy Ghost is the heavenly life of your soul; He dwells within you, and that indwelling, that heavenly life given to you by God, the Holy Ghost, is truly more precious to you than the life of your body.

You say that Jesus Christ does so much for you, and you say so rightly. But who gave you Jesus? The answer is in the Apostles' Creed: "I believe in Jesus Christ, Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost." Jesus was conceived, He became man in the womb of His blessed Mother by the power of the Holy Ghost. The more you appreciate the fact that God, the

Son, became man like one of us, the greater should be your gratitude toward the Holy Ghost Whose power brought this work to fulfillment.

If you have never thought of this before, then you have been, perhaps unknowingly, ungrateful to your oldest friend. For the Holy Ghost is your oldest friend. When you were born your soul was deprived of the beauty of sanctifying grace which God wanted it to have. Who was the first of the three persons in God to stoop down in pity and beautify your soul with the heavenly brilliance of sanctifying grace? Who was it who marked your soul with the saving sign of a child of God? It was the Holy Ghost. He did all this for you in the sacrament of baptism.

And in the sacrament of confirmation the Holy Ghost gave you the strength you need to fight the battles of life as a well-trained member of the army of Christ. But the work of the Holy Ghost is not limited to the sacraments of baptism and confirmation. His power goes to work for you when you receive any one of the seven sacraments. Is it not thrilling to know that the weakest human being can command a power so great as the power of the Holy Ghost for his own good? Then is it not strange that we pay so little attention to the Holy Ghost?

And on the part of God?

Dearer to God than a thousand Solomon's temples is the house which the Holy Ghost has sanctified in baptism: the body and the soul of a Christian. For such a one is not an

earthly temple but a temple built in heaven.

"Know you not," says St. Paul, "that your members are the temple of the Holy Ghost Who is in you? Know you not that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"

Consider the beauty of that temple, built on a foundation reddened with the blood of Christ, dazzling with the brightness of sanctifying grace, re-enforced by the Holy Spirit with the strength and power of His gifts and adorned by Him with the fruits of His spirit. To each one of us is given the responsibility of caring for and preserving this temple. Ours is the power to strengthen, to beautify it still more by working hand in hand with the almighty power of God. Ours is also the power to destroy that temple of God and send it crashing down in ruins more swiftly than the awful power of an earthquake can destroy a city. One mortal sin, in the wink of an eye, can work that ruin and make mockery of the blood of Christ and destroy and pollute the temple of the Holy Ghost — which you are!

And remember: "If any man will violate the temple of God, him shall God destroy!"

IF YOU want a prayer to help you to obtain a greater love for the Holy Ghost and a greater share in the help of His power, let me suggest a prayer that you say many times over, but which, perhaps, you say carelessly and thoughtlessly many times. That prayer is the simple, short prayer of the sign of the cross. Say it this moment. Say just the words in the secret sanctuary of your heart where the Holy Spirit dwells in the friendship of sanctifying grace. Say it devoutly, lovingly.

"In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

Often reflect on these thoughts about the third person in the Blessed Trinity. It will help you to say with fuller understanding, greater gratitude and deeper love the prayer which we call the doxology: "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen."

ASK A CHILD

A recent survey to determine the effects of television on school children, reported by the *Pittsburgh Catholic*, showed that fifty-three per cent went to bed later; twenty-one per cent admitted their studies have suffered and thirty per cent are far less prepared for their studies the next day.

The pupils said that they paid little attention to "children's programs" but preferred romance and sports. If they were parents themselves, would they permit their children to view the same programs? The answer of ninety-one per cent was, "No!" Now what was that you were saying about crazy, mixed-up kids?

I WORRY ABOUT PAST SINS

Fear has only one place in religion, and that is to keep us from sin; or, if we have sinned, to bring us to repentance and confession.

FOR many persons the remembrance of past sins is a source of worry, keen anxiety, and even at times of morbid fears. Among these persons we find:

1) The scrupulous, who, in spite of agonizing efforts to make a good confession, cannot find peace of soul. They are haunted by the thoughts: "Maybe I didn't tell my sins right. Maybe the priest didn't understand me. Perhaps I did not have the right kind of contrition."

2) Ordinary persons who suddenly remember a sin of their childhood or youth and in panic ask themselves: "Did I ever confess that sin?"

3) Older people who are preyed upon by a brooding, almost despairing sense of guilt for the sins of their lives. This is not an uncommon accompaniment of the change of life, most often in women, sometimes in men.

As a consequence of the excessive and morbid sense of guilt that some

persons have for their past sins, a number of modern psychiatrists have felt it their duty to try to eliminate all sense of guilt from their patients' lives. Unfortunately, the solution to which they have sometimes been led is to permit the patient to continue performing immoral actions, but without a sense of guilt.

What is the true and reasonable attitude which a person should have toward his past sins? We must distinguish with relation to the consciousness of guilt, as in all other matters, between what is right and reasonable, and what is excessive and morbid.

CONTRITION

A CORRECT attitude toward the sins of the past demands, first of all, *contrition*. This may be defined as: a sorrow and hatred for sin, based on supernatural motives, with the resolution not to commit that sin again.

Contrition is the first and absolutely essential element for the forgiveness of sin. Not even God can

forgive an unrepented sin. For without repentance there is still the adherence of the will to evil, which is necessarily repugnant to the infinite holiness of God.

Contrition must evidently extend at least to every grievous sin. It must be based on supernatural motives, hating sin because it makes us liable to the loss of heaven and the pains of hell, or, more perfectly, because it is an offense against God Who is worthy of all our service and love. Sorrow that is directed to merely natural motives does not suffice for the forgiveness of sin by God. For example, if a man is sorry for sin only because it brought him to jail or resulted in the loss of his good name, his motivation is purely selfish and has no value before God.

Contrition does not, as some mistakenly suppose, involve any perceptible feeling of sorrow. These feelings, tears of repentance and the like, may or may not be present. They can be helpful, but are not essential for true contrition. Contrition is a matter of will, not of feeling. It implies the recognition of sin as the greatest of all evils, and the firm resolve, with the help of God, not to commit sin again. It may be safely said that a person who sincerely wants to be sorry for his sins has the requisite contrition.

CONFESSION

FOR the establishment of the proper attitude toward past sins, it is necessary, secondly, that the sins have been rightly *confessed*. Why? Simply

because it is the will of Christ that we receive the forgiveness of sins by submitting them to the power of the keys which He delegated to His Church. As every sin involves an element of pride, so Christ has determined that the way of forgiveness is the way of humiliation, the confession of sin to another man who has been delegated to remit sins in His name.

On the first Easter night, Jesus appeared in the midst of His disciples and, breathing upon them, said: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them. Whose sins you shall retain, they are retained." (John, 20/20-23) These words evidently imply the necessity of confession. For the power of binding and loosing, of remitting and retaining sin, was certainly not intended by Christ to be exercised in an arbitrary way. But it is only by confession, or self-accusation that the apostles and their successors in the priesthood could know the sins of the penitent, his repentance and resolution not to sin again, upon which their decision must be based. It is necessary, then, that each grievous sin be confessed.

However, once a person has made a sincere effort to confess his sins with contrition and the resolve to amend, he should not be troubled or anxious about them. It is not necessary to confess the same sins again and again in order to make certain of forgiveness. Only if it is absolutely certain that a sin of the past has not

been confessed, or that previous confessions have been made without sorrow or purpose of amendment, is there an obligation of bringing up that sin again.

If one is merely doubtful as to whether a sin of the remote past has been confessed or not, or doubtful whether contrition for this sin was sufficient, there is no obligation to mention the matter in confession. One who has a tendency to be worried and anxious about past sins definitely should not attempt to make a confession of such sins. For him it is not the will of God and will do more harm than good.

ABIDING SORROW

After contrition and confession, there should remain a humble, tranquil, *abiding sorrow for sin*, the spirit of penance, or, as spiritual writers so often call it, compunction of heart. This abiding sorrow for sin is a very valuable part of the spiritual life. It makes us more humble, strikes at the roots of our pride, causes us to be more grateful to God Who has shown mercy to us who are so undeserving of His mercy, and constitutes an effective barrier against relapse into sin.

Such was the sorrow of David, crying out in the Psalms: "Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy. And according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my iniquity. Wash me yet more from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my iniquity and my sin is always before me." (Psalm 50) Such was the sor-

row of St. Peter, who all his life wept tears of repentance for having denied his Master.

However, once we have confessed our sins with sorrow and purpose of amendment, it is not wise to recall those sins in detail or with vivid recollection of their circumstances. It is enough that we realize in a general way that we are sinners before God. God does not want us digging around in the past. Once we have used the means that God has prescribed for obtaining forgiveness, we should then in tranquillity and peace leave them to the mercy of God.

It is a very useful practice, at the close of our confession to say: "I include all the sins of my past life, especially sins against the fourth commandment," (or the sixth or seventh —whatever we are most sorry for); but it is not necessary to mention these sins in detail.

An excessive or morbid consciousness of guilt is not based on objective truth, but on improper subjective attitudes. Among these improper attitudes may be mentioned:

1) Pride. There are some who cannot banish the remembrance of past falls, not because they have offended God, but because their ideals of their own perfection and moral worth have been shattered.

2) An excessive fear of past sins may also stem from a mistrust of the mercy of God. Some persons, very often because of a harsh and severe upbringing, have conceived the idea of God as a tyrant Who is always on the watch to catch us in some fault in order that He may condemn us to hell.

3) However, for the greater number of persons so afflicted, their morbid consciousness of guilt is the expression of a morbid anxiety-state. It is a condition akin to the fear of high places, fear of the dark, fear of being confined in closed rooms. It is similar to the anxieties of those who can never be satisfied that they have set the alarm-clock properly, or locked the door, or turned off the water. In the persons with the morbid sense of guilt, the anxiety has merely centered itself about religious matters, particularly about their past sins.

FEAR IS HARMFUL

IT scarcely need be said that an excessive and morbid sense of guilt, an unreasonable fear, is of no advantage; indeed, it is harmful to the spiritual life of the individual. True contrition, salutary before God, is humble and tranquil, not disturbed and anxious. Though conscious of guilt, it puts its trust in the mercy which God has promised to all who repent.

Neurotic persons who are plagued with a constant morbid sense of guilt may need psychiatric attention, just the same as the victims of claustrophobia or kleptomania. They should be careful, however, to go only to a psychiatrist who has sound moral principles. Any qualified psychiatrist can use the tools of the trade; but one who is not guided by the principles of morality will do more harm than good when he attempts to mould the consciences of his patients.

Others, in whom the condition may not have progressed so far, may find relief in obedience to an understanding confessor. No matter what fear of past sins they may have, when the confessor tells them to forget the past, not to bring it up again in confession, they should obey. Such persons would do well, also, at least temporarily, not to concentrate their reflections on the fear-inducing aspects of religion, such as the thought of death, judgment and hell, but to turn their thoughts to the goodness and mercy of God, and the wounds of Jesus Christ. They should train themselves to look at the crucifix, and recall that the Son of God has paid the penalty for their sins.

NO MATTER how numerous or terrible have been a man's sins, the mercy of God is greater still. God has told us: "My mercy is above all My works." If one still has a doubt, let him take the Scriptures and begin to count the number of times that God mentions His mercy to repentant sinners. He will have to give up. For it is mentioned more than 5,000 times.

We should impress upon our minds this important thought: fear has only one place in religion, and that is to keep us from sin; or, if we have sinned, to bring us to repentance and confession. Once it has fulfilled this purpose, it will give place to love. As St. John says: "Perfect love casts out fear."

The most effective reducing exercise for any part of the body is to move the head slowly from side to side when offered a second helping.

Readers Ask...

The Last Rites

Louis G. Miller, C.S.S.R.

QUESTION: Every now and then I read in the papers the account of an automobile or train accident in which a priest comes and administers the "last rites." What exactly does this mean?

ANSWER: Newspapermen have indeed become very fond of the expression "last rites" in their descriptions of accidents. Strictly speaking, the term is not entirely accurate. The priest actually administers several sacraments to the dying person, and a sacrament is much more than a rite. The rite comprises the words and actions through which the work of the sacrament is effected.

Here is the procedure followed by a priest when he is called to provide spiritual ministration for a Catholic who is seriously ill or injured.

First, he will, if the injured person is conscious, hear his confession and suggest a sincere act of sorrow for sin. Then, if it is possible in the circumstances, he will administer Holy Communion, called at such a time "Viaticum" which means "with you on the way."

After this comes the sacrament of extreme unction or last anointing. This is the sacrament designed to provide spiritual strength and purification of conscience when one is in danger of death. The priest having dipped his thumb in consecrated oil, makes the sign of the cross on the injured person's eyes, nostrils, lips, ears and hands, with specified and appropriate prayers.

After the anointing, the priest administers the blessing for the hour of death, to which is attached a plenary indulgence. Conditions for gaining this indulgence are

(besides the reception of the sacraments) sincere sorrow for sin, resignation to the will of God, and the pronouncing, if possible, of the holy name of Jesus.

What if, when the priest reaches the scene of an accident, he finds the person concerned unconscious or already dead? He administers extreme unction to an unconscious Catholic, and he does so also even for the dead, if death has occurred just a short time before. In such a case, he traces the sign of the cross on the forehead in what is called the "short form" of the sacrament. The reason is that in the opinion of most doctors, the soul does not leave the body immediately upon apparent death, but may remain for as long as two hours after life has apparently ceased. The Church wishes to give her children all possible help and instructs her priests to administer the sacrament "conditionally" in such a case.

AS FOR dying non-Catholics, the sacraments cannot of course be given to them if they do not want to receive them or acknowledge the true Church. But the priest tries to help them insofar as he can by suggesting an act of sorrow for sin and sincere love of God. These are basic requirements for any soul which desires to see the face of God in heaven.

Not only a priest, but anyone can perform this act of charity of helping a dying person prepare himself to meet Christ by true sentiments of sorrow and love. The standard act of contrition may be spoken in the ear of the dying person and may indeed be of tremendous importance to him.

HISTORY OF A HEART

HISTORY has not recorded the poet or lover who first used the heart as a symbol of love. Ancient stone inscriptions, paintings, sculpture, literature, song — all have used the heart to signify love. From time immemorial the heart has symbolized man's greatest emotion and virtue: love.

Quite naturally then when Catholics began to think and meditate upon the love of God for all mankind, the traditional symbol — the heart — became associated with that divine love. When men thought of Christ's love, when they looked upon the Saviour dying upon the cross, they thought of the heart of Jesus Christ: the heart beating and burning with warmth, affection and love for all men. Soon men began to honor this heart in a special way. This is how devotion to the Sacred Heart gradually began and developed.

The Church has always acted very slowly. Very few devotions in the Catholic Church skyrocket into popularity, unless they are given some visible supernatural push — like apparitions, private revelations. Sometimes they receive impetus from some

The story inside the story
of the development and
approbation of devotion to
the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

MARTIN A. STILLMOCK, C.S.S.R.

great saint. Thus it was with devotion to the Sacred Heart. Slowly, almost imperceptibly, this devotion fingered its way into Catholic consciousness down through the centuries.

But Christ wanted this devotion spread throughout the world. So He Himself provided the spark that hastened its spread by appearing, in 1674, to a humble Visitation nun of Paray-le-Monial — now known throughout the Catholic world as St. Margaret Mary Alacoque. He requested that His heart, "encircled by a crown of thorns, surrounded by flames and surmounted by a cross" should be honored and its picture exposed throughout the whole world.

St. Margaret Mary's confessor, Blessed Claude de la Colombiere, believed in the apparition. Together they began to spread the devotion

throughout the world, giving it great impetus by their own fervor and holy lives. The devotion soon became well known and was widely practiced. Laity, religious, priests, bishops, and even popes looked on it with the greatest favor.

By 1726, Rome was besieged by petitions, not only from France but from the whole Catholic world, requesting a feast of the Sacred Heart with a proper office and Mass. When our Lord appeared to St. Margaret Mary in 1675, He said: "I demand that the first Friday after the octave of the feast of the Blessed Sacrament, (i.e. Corpus Christi) be dedicated to a special feast to honor My sacred heart by the reception of Holy Communion on that day and by making reparation by an honorable amendment."

FROM France came the famous Jesuit, Father Gallifet, to act as postulator of the cause. Besides his own tremendous influence, he had the backing of the kings of Poland and Spain and large numbers of the hierarchy. The case was outlined perfectly; no flaws were apparent. From the pope on down everyone was favorable.

The devil's advocate was pursuing his questions relentlessly. Systematically, smoothly, all the objections were answered. The lawyers were putting away their papers ready to go home. Everything was settled. Not even one of the Church's most brilliant lawyers, Prosper Lambertini, the devil's advocate, and later Pope Benedict

XIV, could find valid objections to the devotion to the Sacred Heart.

But Lambertini had one question left. Very simple; very innocent. "Why pay special honor to the physical heart of Christ?"

Gallifet shot back his reply instantly: "Because the heart was the sensible origin and seat of the affections of the Redeemer, especially love."

Again scuffling of feet. Surely this was a satisfactory answer. But as always the devil's advocate was a hard man to satisfy. Slowly, resolutely, he rose to his feet. He began to address the assembled cardinals: "We all want to grant permission for this devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and we came here today prepared to do so. But the basic reason alleged for honoring the heart of Jesus is that it is the sensible origin and seat of the affections. That point is in dispute among the philosophers, many of the most reputable claiming that the brain and not the heart is the sensible origin and seat of the affections. By approving this devotion we would be committing the Church to the approval of this doctrine which is dubious."

A sad group of defeated, dejected men left the room. Kings, princes, bishops, cardinals, religious, all the talent of the brilliant Jesuit Society had been behind the petition for the approval of a feast and office for the Sacred Heart. If they had failed, who could now succeed?

Though Rome had not approved the feast, devotion to the Sacred

Heart continued to spread far and wide. In 1758, about thirty years after Rome had handed down a negative decree, the book stalls of Italy were featuring a new novena to the Sacred Heart with a six-page introduction.

HISTORIANS in the field of dogmatic theology are not wont to pay much attention to pious novenas filled mostly with affections. But this little novena to the Sacred Heart and its masterful introduction are mentioned by writers who pen the history of the Sacred Heart devotion. For it was written by a well-known Neapolitan priest by the name of Alphonsus Liguori. He had written a moral theology which was highly popular for its prudence and practicality, and which was later to help earn for him the title of doctor of the Church. In fifteen years he had published more than thirty-five books.

The Jesuits and St. Alphonsus were great mutual friends. When members of the Society heard of the new work they were highly interested. Was not Alphonsus Liguori known as Naples' most brilliant lawyer before he gave up his practice? Surely he still retained his lawyer's penchant for having a sound proof for everything he said. The Jesuits were looking for sound proof on which to rest their case for approval of the devotion to the Sacred Heart.

The Jesuits read St. Alphonsus' book and were not disappointed. In his masterful introduction he laid down the theological as well as the philosophical basis for devotion to the *Adorable Heart of Jesus*.

After first mentioning the rise of the devotion, he goes on to say: "This devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ is nothing more than an exercise of love toward this amiable Saviour. But as to the principal object of this devotion, the *spiritual* object is the love with which the heart of Jesus Christ is inflamed toward men, because love is generally attributed to the heart, as we read in many places in Scripture: 'My son, give me thy heart' . . . 'The God of my heart, and the God that is my portion forever.'"

After quoting a few more passages from Scripture, St. Alphonsus continues: "But the *material* or sensible object is the most sacred heart of Jesus, not taken separately by itself, but united to His sacred humanity, and consequently to the divine person of the Word."

ST. Alphonsus then mentions the case of Father Gallifet and his failure to answer the questions before the Sacred Congregation. After this he very humbly states that in his own poor opinion Gallifet was wrong in ascribing to the heart the honor of being the seat of the affections. St. Alphonsus then adopts the modern opinion that the brain is the seat of the emotions.

Then St. Alphonsus points out the real reason why we honor the heart of Christ: "The hope that we entertain that this concession (feast, Mass and office) will someday be granted in favor of the heart of our Lord, is not built upon the above-mentioned opinions of the ancients, but on the common opinion of philosophers, both

ancient and modern, that the human heart, even though it may not be the seat of the affections and the principle of life, is, notwithstanding, as the most learned Muratori writes, 'one of the primary fountains and organs of the life of man.' If therefore, the heart is one of the primary fountains of human life, it cannot be doubted that the heart has a principal share in the affections of man."

As one of his clinching arguments St. Alphonsus then states: "If therefore the Church has judged it right to venerate by a special office the lance, the nails, the thorns, because they came in contact with those parts of Christ's body which were particularly tormented in the passion, how much more have we not reason to hope that a special office may be granted in honor of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ, which had such a great share in His affections and the immense internal sorrows that He suffered in seeing the torments that were prepared for Him."

This clear, brilliant exposition for the basic reason for honoring the sacred heart of Jesus, delighted the Jesuits, for whom Alphonsus held the highest regard. Now surely the cause would succeed.

EIGHT years later, in 1765, Alphonsus Liguori presented his work on the Sacred Heart to Pope Clement XIII. Three years previously Alphonsus, whom Pope Clement held in great favor and esteem, had been named Bishop of St. Agatha of the Goths. Not only was Alphonsus in-

fluent with the pope, but now became an outspoken defender of the Jesuits over whom the storm clouds of suppression were gathering.

The Jesuits welcomed this great fighter and champion of the Church to promote this cause so dear to them. Their great hopes were realized in that same year of 1765, when the petition was granted.

The Sacred Heart had reserved for humble St. Alphonsus the great honor of securing the approbation for the feast of the Sacred Heart, with the proper office and Mass. As the great saint himself wrote: "What heart among all hearts can be found more worthy of love than the heart of Jesus?"

PROFIT FROM SERMONS

Donoso Cortes, famous statesman and renowned thinker and writer, while acting as Spanish ambassador to France, was accustomed to assist at Mass every Sunday in the church near the embassy. There he knelt in the midst of the working people. After the Gospel, a young priest ascended the pulpit to preach, while the statesman and thinker listened with evident interest and attention.

Some supercilious friends, noticing it, asked him one day:

"Your Excellency, we have been wondering how you can listen to that young preacher with so much interest. What profit do you find from his sermons?"

"Do not let that astonish you," said Cortes. "In that young priest, as in every priest in the pulpit, when explaining the word of God, I see and respect the divine authority."

TEEN-AGERS AND SCHOOL

SOME teen-agers, when they arrive at their mid teens, think that they have had enough of school. They've been knuckling down under the authority of teachers since they were six or seven years old. That's a long time. They've been confined to what seems to them the prison of the classroom for close on to ten years. It isn't much longer, they fear, that they can stand it. Down with report cards and blackboards! Away with books and maps and probing examinations! Teachers and professors to the lions!

These boys and girls prove that they are serious in their desire to be done with school by having as little to do with school as possible. They can't easily escape going to school, especially if they are not yet sixteen years of age. Generally they can't escape going to school even though they are sixteen years of age and past sixteen, for their parents won't let them turn in their books and pencils and erasers after the fashion of a baseball player handing in his suit and his spikes when his playing days are over.

Furthermore, it is the expected thing here in the United States for a

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It is not always easy to continue going to school when so many powerful influences tempt teen-agers to slam shut their books forever.

teen-age boy and girl to allow himself and herself to be educated at least to the extent of completing the twelfth grade and of receiving a diploma to prove that fact. A boy or a girl who does not finish high school is as one who has been set aside, one who has been swept out of the current of teen-age ways.

So, if they can't get out of school entirely, they can conduct themselves in such a way as to get as little out of school as possible. They can fritter away their time in thinking about, talking about, dreaming about and taking part in athletic contests. They can use whatever intellectual ability they have in appraising the qualities of the various members of the opposite sex in the classroom rather than the contents of textbooks that are the *raison d'être* of the classroom.

Or they can just let the time go by without doing anything worthwhile

so that when they come to graduate they do not know how to spell their own names without assistance or to add up three and five and get the same answer two times in a row. It is not too difficult to throw away time in high school and still continue to advance in the grades and finally graduate like all the rest.

THANK GOD, not all teen-agers measure up to this sad description. Unfortunately, though, enough of them do to warrant a word or two of advice about the importance, indeed the preciousness of a high school education; and another word or two about the kind of education that should be preferred.

First of all, it must be admitted that it is not always easy to continue going to school when powerful forces line themselves up against the teenagers in order to move them to slam shut their books for good and all.

Nowadays in many quarters a boy seventeen or eighteen years old can command a very high salary from offices and factories and businesses of every kind. In high school he is making nothing beyond the few dollars he picks up in the waning hours of the afternoon after school is over, and on weekends. He is practically grown up, and he is still depending on his parents for his food and clothing and shelter. It makes him ashamed of himself. It makes him want to go out and earn his own way instead of free-loading at the expense of his parents.

Besides, many of the branches studied in high school seem so use-

less. Of what *practical* value, the teen-ager asks, is mathematics or a knowledge of seventeenth century English authors or the history of ancient countries like Greece and Rome? Why spend time on such branches if one has no intention of going on for higher education? Ancient history won't make you any money. English authors won't win for you a husband.

Stop right there! Husbands! That's another force attempting to drive girls out of school before their time. Not a few teen-age girls would like to quit school in their junior or senior year (a few even in their sophomore year) in order to get married, or if not actually to get married, at least to devote full attention to the process that precedes marriage, namely, total preoccupation with boys or with a boy. Books, teachers, the paraphernalia of education get in the way of that fascinating and highly competitive pastime and profession. Better to lose a book than a boy, a thousand times better. That's the way some girls are made. Boys simply turn them into jelly. How they would like to stop this school business so that they could concentrate completely on the one great subject, indeed the only subject of their interest, boys!

These are only a few of the temptations against a full and seriously accepted education. There are many others that teen-agers must struggle against. And yet all these temptations and forces can so easily be defeated and done away with by one whose mind has not been allowed to rust entirely from lack of use.

The boy and the job, for example. Of course, he can command a high salary in a factory while times are good, and that, merely by sweeping the floors or by making round holes in square pieces of wood or by scanning for imperfections potatoes that come down a conveyor belt and fall into a bin, and removing same from belt.

But will the times remain good always? And even though they do, will a boy, soon to become a man, be satisfied all the years of his life sweeping floors or making round holes in square pieces of wood or examining potatoes for imperfections? Or in doing something else just as unimaginative and soul-killing day in and day out, year in and year out, merely because his mind is not sufficiently developed to permit him to hold a job that demands the use of the mind more than the use of the hands?

IT is true, some people have to do the menial chores and jobs of life. There must be the water-carriers and the hewers of wood. These are the ones who have no chance or aptitude for education and the development of the mind. They will be satisfied with their work, for God has built them up in such a way as to enable them to find compensation and reward in what they do, to make up for the joy and feeling of accomplishment that they would have if their work were on a higher level.

So also in regard to the girl who would like to give up her books in favor of a boy, the girl who is almost hypnotized and entranced by boys.

Can she make a success of the rather complex vocation and avocation of marriage if she knows nothing or at best very little beyond the skill that is necessary for the painting of her fingernails and the combing of her hair? Will not the girl who insists on getting all the mind development possible be in a better position to build a home and to train children and to talk intelligently to her husband when he comes home from the office in the evening?

Will not the sharpness of her mind that resulted from her education give her greater balance in the difficult affairs of marriage and a higher appreciation of the qualities needed in order to make marriage succeed? Is not an intelligent wife and mother better than an ignorant wife and mother?

Learning all that they are able to learn is bound to broaden the minds of boys and girls. It is bound to give them good and solid judgment in evaluating the news of the world and of their country so that instead of always following the word and the opinion of someone else they may follow their own word and opinions. It will help them to determine what is good news and what is bad, what causes should be supported and what causes opposed, when freedom is in danger and when freedom should be curbed in the interest of the common good.

Ignorance does not make for the full and happy life. And they are ignorant who refuse to make use of the opportunity of developing the mind

as that opportunity is so wonderfully given to them in the high schools of America.

BY no means, however, do these words imply that all teenagers at all times and no matter what their attitude toward education, should be forced to finish high school. Surely it would be better for them to leave school the moment the law allows if they are the kind who refuse to study or even to make an effort to acquire some of the knowledge that it took the world thousands of years to bring to life and then to maturity.

To attend high school only because there is no way of getting out of it is something that should not be tolerated even for a moment. It is the malingering boy and girl, the "gold brick" as the army called those soldiers who were worthless because they not only never contributed anything to the welfare and the morale of the outfit to which they belonged but even counted themselves persecuted if they were asked to turn over a finger in the interest of their unit, it is teen-age boys and girls of this stamp who generally get in trouble.

They do not have enough to do in view of the fact that they refuse to study. And their minds are not sufficiently cultivated to show them the necessity of law and order and the rights of the neighbor. The idleness and emptiness of their lives cause them to feel like misfits. They blame everybody but themselves for their failure. Only trouble can follow.

These boys and girls are much better off if they are given a job where they can put in a full day of work. Preferably the work should be of such a kind as to interest them. It may be that they have an aptitude for carpentry or plastering or baking bread or repairing machinery. It may be that they are excellent at planting flowers or painting houses. For them to get into such work may be their salvation. For them to continue high school when they have no determination to study and no talent for learning even though they do study may be their ruin.

TO those who intend to go all the way through high school and to get out of their four years of study and training all that they possibly can in the way of information in the arts and sciences, one great warning must be given. It is this. Let them pick out a school that offers them a complete education, not an education that concentrates only on the body or only on the mind, or only on the body and the mind but not at all on the soul. The man who is most thoroughly educated is one who is educated in his body, in his mind and above all in his soul.

For Catholic teen-agers this kind of education is given in the Catholic school. It is their obligation to attend a Catholic high school unless it is quite impossible and they have the permission of the bishop of their diocese, or the permission of their pastor, to attend a school not under Catholic auspices. How many Catholic teen-agers in public high schools

realize this fact, *that they may be committing a serious sin* by attending a public high school when there is no obstacle placed in the way of their attending a Catholic high school? Their parents are willing that they go to the Catholic high school; the school is not far away; the tuition is either nothing or so modest that it can easily be paid. It is their own fault.

Catholic education is so important for Catholic boys and girls because it teaches these boys and girls how to live in accord with the destiny that some day they hope to reach. Education should be concerned with the things that are bound up in the making of money, in the appreciating of the arts, in the managing of a business and a home. But education should be primarily concerned with those things which are eternal. Human things are but of temporary importance. That which is of everlasting importance is the soul of a man. It is the soul that never dies. It is the soul that will be happy or in pain for all eternity.

Right living will assure the soul of everlasting happiness. But right living is taught in the Catholic school. It is something that goes along with the teaching of all the branches from history to algebra. Always the emphasis is laid on right thinking and right living. Even on earth a man, though he be a millionaire, cannot be at peace unless he knows his purpose in life, his destiny at the end of earthly life, and the means he has on hand for the reaching of this destiny. The im-

parting of these great truths to young minds is an essential part of Catholic education.

THESE words are not to be construed as an attack on the public high school. The public high school is fine — as far as it goes. It develops healthy bodies; it contributes to the stocking of the mind with all the human facts that are necessary for a humanly successful life. But it stops at the soul. Over that threshold it will not go. Therein it fails. And because it fails, all Catholic teenagers should make every effort to receive their education from a Catholic high school.

If certain teen-agers' parents refuse to let their children go to a Catholic high school, nothing much can be done about it. The militia cannot be called out to persuade the parents to fall into a different frame of mind. But the young people themselves should at least try, using every prudent stratagem at their command, to make their parents see the shortsightedness of their policy. This is one matter in which Catholic teen-agers can be sure they are right — the necessity and obligation of their attending a Catholic high school.

If they fail in changing the minds of their parents in spite of all they say and do, what is left for them to say and to do? And how about the boys and girls who do not have a Catholic high school in their town? And the boys and girls who cannot gain entry into the local Catholic high school because it is too crowded? All of these

have the duty of being instructed in their holy religion. None of them can receive the instruction in school due to circumstances over which they have no control. What then?

They should do the next best thing — they should be most conscientious in attending the religious classes that are held during the week in their parish church or school. Here again there is an obligation binding the conscience of the teen-ager, not only to attend these classes in religion but also to make every effort to profit by them. If at some future date, when life is over, teen-agers are given the terrifying news that they have lost their souls and can never see the face of God, too late will they discover that the beginnings of the tragedy can be traced back to the days when they were too indifferent and world-minded and sophisticated to absorb the religion given them by Jesus Christ as an aid in fighting the spiritual battles of life and eventually in getting to heaven.

IN reality, attendance at religious classes, whether this be during a released time period in the middle of the school week or during free time at the end of the week, is a decided advantage to the teen-ager. The more information he has, the richer will be his life. And if the information he possesses is of the highest order possible, namely, the revelation of God Himself as given to man when Our Lord was upon the earth, his life will be infinitely enriched and blessed.

The final word is this.

Few people who were persevering enough to obtain an education, at

least to graduation from high school, were ever sorry afterwards that they had done so. Especially is this true of people who were fortunate enough to receive a solid, Catholic education from the high school that they attended.

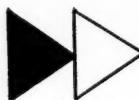
On the other hand innumerable people who quit their studies long before they should have done so, lived to regret deeply their foolish impetuosity and their lack of foresight and perspective. An education lost can seldom be regained.

A word to the wise should be sufficient for the teen-agers of today. Many of them lay claim to wisdom. Let them substantiate their claim by being satisfied with nothing less than a thorough profane and Catholic education in a thoroughly American and Catholic high school.

NOTE FOR PARENTS

The dear old retired priest was saying Mass, a requiem Mass. Suddenly in the slow rumble of his voice I caught and recognized the prayer for the father and the mother of the priest. Surely, I thought, this man's parents have been dead for many, many years; yet after all that time their priest-son still continues to remember them every day, to remember them where it matters most.

What an investment those parents made in that son! Long gone home to God, they left behind them a priest who day after day mentioned them to God at Mass. It's a wonderfully reassuring thing to know that you have a son who will not forget, who will be able to remember you in the most perfect way.



POINTS of FRICTION

Money

"The love of money is the root of all evil," wrote the wise man long ago. Certainly the ill-regulated love of material things can be identified as the cause of much trouble and unhappiness and downright misery in the world.

In other words, one's attitude toward money can be a source of great friction, if it is not well-ordered. To be well-ordered means to avoid extremes. Here are two extreme attitudes toward money which the good Christian will try sincerely to avoid.

I. Miserliness

NO ONE loves a miser. There are, of course, degrees of miserliness. There is the extreme case of the man who starves himself and lives in rags while hoarding large sums of money, which he loves to hold in his hands and count. But there is also the respectable miser who lives in some comfort, but has to struggle mightily with himself to give away even so much as a penny.

The picturesque language of the street is rich in scornful titles for the miser. He is referred to as a "skinflint," a "cheapskate," a "tightwad," etc.

There are various spheres of human activity in which niggardliness of character ordinarily expresses itself. Most important is the home. Everybody has heard of fathers who permit their wives and children to live practically in penury, because it hurts them so much to hand out anything over and above the absolute necessities of life.

The fault shows itself also in the fulfillment of normal duties outside the home.

Louis G. Miller, C.S.S.R.

When there is a drive on for charity, the miserly character is always revealed. If he can get out of giving anything, he rejoices in being able to do so, or in giving the smallest possible amount consonant with saving face.

II. Prodigality

AT THE other extreme is the spendthrift. He is one who foolishly and wastefully and usually selfishly squanders money, whether he happens to possess only a little, or whether he has much. Un-dependability is his trademark, as manifested in these ways:

He is almost totally without a sense of obligation toward past indebtedness and present duties. He is ingenious in thinking up new ways to gain credit. Sometimes, with his irresponsibility toward just debts, he has an engaging trait of generosity, which however is not to be admired. He is lavish with tips and magnanimous with friends.

He is an easy mark for get-rich-quick schemes and for gambling in any form. With the tendency to gamble, there goes a tendency to borrow from anyone who will listen, and a tendency likewise to forget the loan.

The spendthrift can be utterly and cruelly unconcerned about the sorry condition in which he leaves those dependent on him. Many a broken home and many a miserable home has been made by such a spendthrift.

Most people have an inclination, flowing from the kind of temperament they possess, toward one or other of these extreme attitudes toward money. They are

inclined to be either too tight or too loose. Let every reader of these lines be honest with himself, analyze himself, and then resolve to keep his attitude toward money

well-ordered. Thus much friction will be avoided, and there will be happiness in families where otherwise there would be discord and lack of peace.

Code of Catholic Conduct

Kneeling

ERNEST F. MILLER, C.S.S.R.

After making a respectful genuflection in the aisle alongside the pew that he intends to occupy for the Mass, the Catholic enters the pew and kneels down.

CATHOLICS kneel down in Catholic churches because they believe that they should adore God with the *whole* person — with the body as well as with the soul. It would seem that some non-Catholics hold that God should be adored only with the soul. The soul should bow low before the omnipotence of the Creator. But the body in the presence of God should remain stiff and upright or seated at ease in a pew, the pew very often having a nice soft cushion on it in order to make the sitting as comfortable as possible for the sitter. Because non-Catholics do not believe in bending the body before God, non-Catholic churches seldom have kneelers between the pews for the kneeling of the worshipers.

Catholics think that it is a contradiction for the soul to bend before God and for the body to refuse to bend before God. The body has duties to God as well as the soul. To give the body a chance to bend before God, Catholic churches are supplied with kneelers between the pews. When a Catholic goes into a pew, he always kneels down at least for a few minutes before sitting down or standing up.

There are several positions that can be assumed besides the position of kneeling when one is safely in one's pew.

One can stand up. This is perfectly proper at certain times during services, as at the time of the reading of the Gospel. Catholics always stand at attention when the holy Scriptures are read at the time of the Mass known as the Gospel. It is also suggested by some that a person should stand up in church when he is so tired that if he sits down or kneels down he may fall asleep.

SECONDLY one can sit down. This also is proper if it is done at a time suggested by the practice of the Church. The congregation sits down always while the sermon is being given. There are other times too. One should be careful not to sit down when sitting down is nothing more than a sign of laziness. Such a case would be that of the man or woman sitting down even at such holy moments as the Consecration or the Communion. If the man or woman were sick, then sitting down would be perfectly legitimate, even at the Consecration or the Communion.

THIRDLY, one can half sit and half kneel down. This is a most miserable manner of giving honor to God. It is a case of carrying water on both shoulders, of serving God and man, of giving in to self by *resting the rear section of one's body on the edge of the pew and of adoring God by resting one's knees on the kneeler*. Catholics should not try to do both at the same time.

SIDEGLANCES

By the Bystander

Fundamental Differences between Catholic and Secular Education

TWO letters have been received, among many others on the subject, in response to the Bystander's comments in the March LIGUORIAN under the heading, *Why So Few Catholic Leaders?*, that require rather lengthy consideration. The writers of the letters drew conclusions from our comments on the shortcomings of educational standards in general in the United States that are not warranted, and are deeply prejudicial to the principle of the importance of a thoroughly Catholic education for every Catholic child and youth. We have no intention of taking back the criticisms we made of American educational methods and standards, both secular and religious; but we do want to make Catholic principles that touch on this matter very clear.

HERE is the substance of the first letter in question: "It is heartwarming to know that some of our Catholic leaders are aware of some of the defects in our Catholic educational system. I was tempted to write and tell you some of them when you published an article some time ago on the

necessity of a Catholic education through college. It seemed unwise at the time because priests and nuns usually don't welcome criticism of Catholic education. The lay person who offers such criticism is considered either bitter or nasty. This is the core of what's wrong with Catholic education — most Catholic educators don't believe in freedom of thought, with the consequence that Catholic pupils are not taught to think. Leaders must be able to think — they can't be sheep. I plan to send my children to Catholic grade school, (we haven't a Catholic high school) and when they are ready for a college education, they won't be high-pressured into a Catholic college. I spent 12 years in Catholic schools and graduated from a state university. It seems to me that, given the correct religious training in the home and early school years, the Catholic boy and girl are not apt to go haywire in a secular university. Those who do usually come from homes where there was little religious training."

HERE is the heart of the second letter: "Congratulations

on your article on the lack of Catholic leadership. Unfortunately, too many Catholics, both religious and lay, have made the fundamental mistake of identifying the Catholic educational system with the Catholic Church, so that the supposed universal high excellence of the former is accepted without question. If there is an obligation in conscience on Catholic parents to send their children to Catholic schools, then they have every right to an educational system that compares favorably with the best in the country. The answer to whether they are getting it is probably a decided NO. The right and duty of educating children reside primarily with the parents. Far too many have completely abdicated. They turn their children over to a Catholic or secular school and there the matter ends for them . . . "

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THREE are two assumptions in these letters that are unfounded, if not actually false. Before they are presented, it can be admitted that Catholics in high places and low are often too touchy, too unreasonably resentful, of even justified criticism of Catholic educational standards and methods. Yet the touchiness is often not a reaction to justified and constructive criticism, but to the false assumptions on which critics base their attacks or to the conclusions which they draw from them. The first assumption is this: *that there is no essential difference between the basic outlook*

or philosophy of a Catholic education and a secular education. Any one who begins with that assumption is bound to come up with wrong conclusions.

There are two fundamental differences between the two systems of education.

The first is that Catholic education is based squarely on the principle of the primacy of the human spirit or soul, on the supereminent importance of a person's achieving his destiny in the next world even while he studies and works for happiness and success in this. In short, Catholic education begins with the words of Jesus Christ: "What doth it profit a man to gain the whole world, and to suffer the loss of his soul?" Secular education, by and large, is geared solely to prepare a person for success in this world. While it does not necessarily deny the primacy of the soul, it ignores it, and in so doing most effectively teaches a child or a youth to ignore it.

Secular educators who have religious beliefs of their own often say and sincerely hold that the home and the Church should take care of guiding the souls of their pupils, while the school prepares them for worldly pursuits and careers. Catholic thinkers and leaders maintain that the primacy of the soul and the importance of its destiny must enter into any educational process if the character of

a child is to be rightly fashioned either for this world or the next.

THE second fundamental difference between Catholic and secular education is that the former bases all its teaching on metaphysical absolutes, that is, principles and truths that are objective, unchangeable and necessary as the starting point of all true knowledge, while the latter is not (to say the least) wedded to any concepts of necessary and eternal truth. Behaviorism, relativism, pragmatism, indifferentism, have, since the turn of the century, always characterized secular education in varying degrees — at various times. It is true that individual teachers or even groups of teachers sometimes rise above them; but the general trend is to greater and greater "freedom of thought" in the sense of freedom of the mind from even such absolute principles as that "truth is one," "truth is the same for all human beings," "knowledge is conformity of the mind with objective reality." Any leadership that will emerge from educational processes that foster such concepts of freedom of thought will be of little value to the nation.

THE second false assumption of some Catholics is *that the accidental shortcomings of some Catholic schools automatically free them from obedience to the serious command of the Church that they give their children a Catholic schooling all the way*

through college and university. We say "automatically," because it is clear that Catholic parents are freed from this law of the Church in certain circumstances, for example, 1) when it is impossible to send their children to a Catholic school, 2) when they have a serious reason for not doing so, approved by their bishop and/or pastor. But deficiencies in the physical plant of a Catholic school (lack of a gymnasium or swimming pool, more crowded classrooms than in public schools, etc.) do not automatically give Catholic parents a right to ignore the law of the Church. Neither do the minor temperamental shortcomings of an individual teacher (found equally in secular schools as in Catholic schools), nor differences of opinion between parents and teachers over such things as grades, punishments, homework, etc. It is easy for a Catholic parent who has acquired a secularistic outlook to make almost any imperfection in a Catholic school into a major indictment, and a reason for a totally unrealistic approval of everything in the nearby secular school. But apart from these individual cases, and apart from the never-to-be forgotten essential differences between Catholic and secular education, sweeping generalizations about Catholic education as compared to secular education are foolish. According to Admiral Rickover, quoted in the *Sideglances of March*, secular education is in a very bad way. According to Msgr. Tracy, Cath-

olic education needs improvement. It is hard to see how any Catholic can claim freedom from the serious law of the Church on the basis of any generalization. If a particular case has real merit, it will have merit in the eyes of the bishop or pastor who has power to grant dispensations from the law, and the duty to require that, if a dispensation is granted, extraordinary means be used by the parents to save and increase the child's realization of the primacy of its soul.

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IT is true, as one letter-writer puts it, that the first right and duty of educating children belongs to the parents. But if they are Catholic parents, their right and duty must be exercised in conformity with the universal laws of the Catholic Church, which speaks to them with the authority of Jesus Christ. So, just as the Church can command them under pain of sin to attend Mass on Sunday, to abstain from meat at certain times, etc., so she can command them both to give their children a good Catholic training at home and to send them to Catholic schools. Anyone who says that this is placing too much emphasis on blind obedience is unaware of two things: 1) Without such a law, thousands of Catholic parents would give their children a purely secular schooling for the flimsiest of reasons (as, indeed, many disobedient Catholics are already doing); 2) Within the very framework of the law pro-

vision is made for dispensation and exception in favor of parents who have valid reasons for such.

In answer to the parents who say, "Our children have received a solid, Catholic, religious training at home; therefore we are freed from the universal law of the Church and may send them to secular high schools or universities," we have this to say. There is no such thing as solid, Catholic religious training without the inculcation of obedience to the Church. No better example of failure in this can be found than a parent who says to a child: "The Church commands us to send you to Catholic schools unless we have approved reasons for doing otherwise. But we know better than the Church, and we need no one to approve our reasons. Therefore you are going to a secular school (or college or university.) Thus the child gets its first, powerful, lasting lesson in "how to be a disobedient Catholic." One more thing: Catholic parents are guilty of great naiveté, not to say blindness, who brush off the reasons behind the law of the Church with the confident statement: "Our child will never lose his faith in a secular high school or college or university." Simple facts and abundant records refute them. The best can go down beneath waves of agnosticism and indifference as these roll over them in secular schools.

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WE shall continue, however, to criticize Catholic educa-

tional methods and achievements in the most constructive way we can. Such criticism will never in

these pages be offered as a basis of disobedience for Catholic parents.

pre-marriage clinic

The Right to Know a Fiancee's Past Sins

Donald F. Miller, C.S.S.R.

PROBLEM: You have set it down as a general principle that it is not wise for engaged couples to make confessions to each other of past falls into sin. What I want to know is this: Does a man have a right to insist on knowing that the girl he is marrying has not previously had affairs with other men? May he ask her to assure him of this fact?

SOLUTION: It can not be said that such a man would be doing anything wrong in asking for such assurance from a girl or woman he is considering as a possible partner for marriage if two conditions are present: 1) that he himself has a clear record of purity in the past, and is not applying a double standard of morality — an easy one for himself and his past failings, and a very strict one for the girl he wants to marry; 2) that he is not guilty of having led the girl from whom he demands assurances of perfect purity in the past into sin. Any man who has already been guilty of the grave scandal of leading a girl into sin should be so overwhelmed with a sense of guilt and a resulting humility that he will not try to probe into the recesses of the one who has suffered spiritual damage from his own undisciplined passions.

To act otherwise is to show that he is the victim of a morbid jealousy that will be a great obstacle to happiness in marriage.

There are two important considerations that stand behind the general principle that total confessions should not be demanded by lovers from each other. The first is the fact that the merciful God so completely forgives every sinner who humbly and sorrowfully confesses his sins in the sacrament of penance, and so completely restores that person to His friendship and love. If God acts so generously in this matter, what human being should do less? The second consideration is the fact that it is so easy for a couple keeping company to discover what kind of moral character each one possesses in the present, no matter what moral misfortune either one may have suffered in the past. The all-important question that two persons have to answer for themselves before they decide on marriage is this: Is the partner I'm thinking of choosing for marriage a lover of God, a hater of sin, one who desires to do God's will and to be faithful to me for life? A reasonable period of company-keeping and courtship can answer this question, without recourse to total confessions of the past.

LOVE IS FREE

Why do a man and a woman have
to make a contract with one
another when they enter marriage?

FRANCIS M. HENGGELER, C.S.S.R.

A part of the instructions given to every young couple about to be married should be a short, clear discourse on the nature and progress of love. About nine-tenths of the troubles of husbands and wives, and many of the cases of infidelity and divorce, are directly traceable to pagan ideas about love that have been taken over by Christians.

The instruction before marriage might well begin with the proposition: love of another can advance through three stages: desire, devotion and friendship.

DESIRE

DESIRE is caused by a need in us; it is the love of another for our own sake. With sex this springs from a natural attraction of body and soul, lying deeper than deliberate choice and therefore apt to become active before our powers of deliberation have a chance to exert their control.

Desire springs from the instinctive longing for the excitement and rest of coming close together; a longing

for the life that only the other can awaken and share — a need to hold in love and to be held in love.

Desire is a passion; it is an impulse. Over this the will must establish its control, guarding the expression of passion — otherwise we cannot avoid lust and waste.

These desires are not bad. The attraction between man and woman is not the result of the fall of Adam; it is put in man by the Creator. Only the unruliness in the passion or impulse is the effect of original sin, which deprived man of sanctifying grace — the supernatural life — and thus disorganized the order which had been set up by the Creator in man's life. As a consequence, these forces, which were intended by the Creator to work in harmony and contribute to the perfection of the human personality under the rule of reason enlightened by faith, now seek their own satisfaction.

Of course, we must not think of this desire as something merely bodily, animal — an effect of glands, simply. The parties in such a union are two persons — this man and this woman — which supposes the recognition of individual qualities and characteristics that attract the mind and will.

DEVOTION

DESIRE tends to grow into a second stage in the progress of love which may be called devotion. This is a disinterested affection which wishes and seeks and works for the happiness of the other, without thought of self. In devotion there is mingled wonder at the revealed personality of the other together with reverence for the dignity of that personality and sacrifice for its good and happiness.

Devotion, if permitted to progress, tends to some sort of permanence which is the one-way road leading to the third stage of love.

FRIENDSHIP

THIS third, or permanent, stage in the progress of love is called friendship: a belonging of two people to one another, each looking for the happiness of the other.

Now it must be clearly pointed out that the basis of this third stage may be any kind of common interest: community of work, community of hobbies, amusements, ideals, or any other kind of activity. The deepest and most lasting foundation for friendship is a whole life shared by the two persons — gathering the joys and worries, birth and death and grace into a life that becomes one but shared by both. Such a friendship is marriage, which includes but rises above the primary bodily relationship.

These are the three stages through which married love advances: mutual desire, mutual devotion and the cer-

tainty that each is committed to the other for the purpose of making their union fruitful and creative for the glory of God and a help to mutual salvation.

WHY IS A CONTRACT NEEDED FOR MARRIAGE?

THE instruction before marriage might well continue with the questions: Why do a man and a woman have to make a contract with one another, when they enter marriage? Why did Christ add so much force to that contract by making it a sacrament? Is the contract or the sacrament just a frill or an adornment, or something that would not essentially be needed at all, because the love of the man and the woman for one another would be sufficient to make and keep them one?

It is best to answer the last question first, because it goes to the root of all the rest. If love, the mutual love demanded by marriage, were an uncontrollable sentiment, something over which the persons themselves had no control, then of course no free contract or sacrament would be needed to sanction the union and constitute marriage. No one can make a contract about something over which he has no control; and the marriage contract would be an empty form if based on such a love, if not indefensible and immoral.

LOVE IS FREE

BUT the love promised in marriage is not an uncontrollable sentiment; rather, it is a free, voluntary act: love in the sense that we are free to love or not to love as we choose. At the

time of the marriage it may be so strong and spontaneous that free will has very little trouble confirming it; but if that were all the marriage contract had to cover, it would still be unnecessary. The marriage contract, however, is made because it looks forward to the time when love will no longer be a spontaneous or instinctive physical thing; the whole essence of the contract signifies this recognition on the part of those marrying. Each one says to the other: "I am free to love you or not to love you; I shall always be free to love you, whether feelings support my free will or contradict it; and so I do now choose and promise and contract that, come what may, live or die my present *feelings* of love, I shall cherish you and love you always by the exercise of my free will that has been given to me by God."

Take that meaning out of the contract of marriage, and the contract itself means nothing at all. Say that love is an overwhelming, uncontrollable thing, in no way subject to free will, and there is nothing left but to believe in the quickest and easiest divorce and the widest free-love and license, because then you say that free will has nothing to do with love.

If men and women understood this, there would be less writhing under the changes that affect sentimental love after marriage, less childish complaint about love being dead, and starving for love, and the "need of someone new to love."

Love is a voluntary thing; that is why marriage is essentially a contract between two free human beings.

THE BEATITUDES OF HOME

1. Blessed is the home where prayer is said, because therein dwells the Lord.

2. Blessed is the home where Sundays and holy days are observed, for its inhabitants shall enjoy the festival of heaven.

3. Blessed is the home from which they do not go out to sinful entertainments, for there will reign true Christian joy and pleasure.

4. Blessed is the home where blasphemy, intemperance, immoral magazines and books, lewd pictures, dirty language never enter, for there will rest the blessings of peace.

5. Blessed is the home where infants are born and soon baptized, for there are formed the children of God.

6. Blessed is the home where the doctrine of Christ is loved and learned; where the Church's laws of Sunday Mass, confession and Communion, fast and abstinence, are faithfully observed, for there will the light of living faith shine forth to all men.

7. Blessed is the home where the priest is called in time to the dying, for there illness will be alleviated and death will be blessed.

8. Blessed is the home where parents are consoled by the love of obedient children, for it will be the dwelling-place of just men, the sanctuary of virtues and the tabernacle of salvation.

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"One with God makes a sure majority."

Shane Leslie in *Cardinal Manning*

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Legend on the parlor grille of a Poor Clare convent:

"The pleasure of dying without trouble is well worth the trouble of living without pleasure."



readers retort

In which readers are invited to express their minds on articles and opinions published in *The Liguorian*. Letters must be signed and full address of the writer must be given, though city and name will be withheld from publication on request.

Is Gambling a Sin?

"There is a pamphlet floating around that is a reprint from THE LIGUORIAN entitled 'Is Gambling a Sin?' Whether the writer of the pamphlet was a priest or a layman, he should have written: 'Almost everywhere in the United States it is against the law to gamble; therefore it is a sin against the 4th commandment.' Gambling is in itself a vice, like dope, illegal whiskey and prostitution; they are all in the same category. . . . People who will give to the Church only through the medium of card parties, bingo, lottery tickets, etc., are not really helping the Church. We would be better off without these people, because they are not children of God and are only a burden to the good who are desperately trying to raise their heads to heaven, while these devils are holding them back. Gambling cannot be used any more reasonably than dope. You would not tell a teen-ager that he could take a small amount of dope for recreation. It is the same with gambling.

Revere, Pa.

J. A. S."

• There are three misstatements made or implied in this blast against gambling: 1) that gambling is prohibited by law almost everywhere in the United States. We do not know what "almost everywhere" means; but there are many states in which gambling is permitted by law; 2) that the state's prohibition of gambling (where such is the law) makes this activity con-

trary to the natural law of God, even in private life; state laws cannot prohibit a family game of poker for small stakes; 3) that gambling is in the same category as dope-taking or prostitution. This is a fantastic misrepresentation. The truth is simply stated: Gambling is not in itself contrary to the natural law; the abuse of gambling is; gambling so easily becomes an abuse that states have the authority to proscribe "public" gambling.

The editors

Touchy Subject

"Please cancel my subscription immediately because in reading THE LIGUORIAN my non-Catholic wife finds it harder and harder to consider ever becoming a Catholic. The article, 'How to Act toward Invalidly Married Catholics,' infuriated her, and even I as a Catholic thought it was very poorly written, expressing absolutely no kindness, charity or understanding such as I told my wife were part of the Catholic religion.

N.N.

R. J. M."

• It is difficult to write frankly and clearly about such touchy subjects as invalid marriages without giving offense to some people, who have been brought up on both tolerance for sinners (which all of us should have) and for their sins as well. But we do not think such subjects should be left untreated.

The editors

Honest Convictions

"Something that amazes and worries me in the issue over segregation is the fact that it is considered practically a crime any more to take an opposite view of any controversial issue. I notice not only in your publication, but others, that those who (as is their right in a free country) state their arguments for segregation generally are condemned as 'odious,' 'rabble rousing,' 'race baiting,' 'selfish and self-righteous,' people with 'hearts full of bitterness,' 'twisted,' 'tangled,' 'egotistical,' guilty of having a 'master-slave complex,' etc. Things have come to a pretty sad pass when in America, honest Americans cannot express their sincere opinion without being prejudged by those who set themselves up as judges of others with whom they differ. A priest once told me that a saint never imputes evil to others. By this I would assume that one who expresses an honest, sincere, opinion (whether he be right or wrong in that opinion) would, if he were a good person himself, assume that another person who perhaps expressed a different opinion was *nevertheless* also honest and sincere in his convictions. I'm afraid brain-washing has spread to the point where it is considered not only a faux-pas socially but a sin morally to disagree with someone on a vital issue. Aside from this I thought perhaps *THE LIGUORIAN* might want to publish (in order to be fair to both sides) the entire opinion (enclosed) of David Lee, a fine, sincere colored leader who has the real welfare of his own race at heart as is evidenced by the facts presented in his testimony.

Alexandria, Virginia

C. M."

The article of Mr. David Lee stresses the economic disadvantages of integration to the colored who have set up segregated business operations in the South. It does not touch the problems of the millions of underprivileged Negroes throughout the

land. In our own treatment of segregation, we have never used such odious name-calling, or any, as is illustrated here against proponents of segregation. We have tried to present principles and evidence for our stand. Everything depends on these. Both sides cannot be right on this issue because they are contradictory. Therefore we cannot present principles and arguments for one side and then say that the principles and arguments on the contradictory side are equally true. That would be nonsense. We respect those who disagree with us; but we campaign for God's truth.

The editors

Mutual Agreement in Rhythm

"Your magazine has made its second appearance in our home. The first issue we smiled about; this issue has me boiling. The article *Mutual Agreement in the Practice of Rhythm* is the reason for the boiling. The man (as he chooses to call himself) who wrote the letter discussed is lacking in a few very necessary manners, such as consideration. It's quite evident he has had little practice at rhythm to be so upset about it all. What about the periods of continence before and after each child, when he had no choice but had to practice self-control? His wife has all my sympathy. Please look at both sides of these problems before creating a hardship for the other half of the union. The marriage contract means more than merely having children and alleviating concupiscence. It's a vocation by which one can enter the kingdom of God. If a husband loves his wife as Christ loves the Church, I believe he could find the grace needed to avoid sin. There is much merit to your article but you failed to point out the husband's responsibility to his wife and his children. The man isn't always the injured and innocent. There should be mutual agreement about such matters as rhythm, but why stop there? Go on to

mutual love, understanding, kindness and appreciation of their marriage. That man will never find any strength from your article—only justification for his own actions. Your responsibility to your public seems to have fallen away in that article. We have ten more issues to receive. It comes as a gift. I hope the magazine improves or it shall go into the trash can. Generalities never answer specific personal problems. Please remember that in your approach to further questions of similar nature.

Penna.

Mrs. J. A. S."

• *The above is one of many letters we are still receiving from readers on the question of mutual agreement in the practice of rhythm, some of them giving even a worse lambasting to the man who wrote the original letter and expressed his personal difficulty in practicing rhythm over a considerable period of time. Practically all these letters miss the point the gentleman made when they ask whether he was able to keep from sin during the time before and after the birth of a baby. He was talking about the difficulties he experienced with rhythm for stretches of two years at a time. The writer of the above letter is correct in stating that all angles of these problems should be considered. Perhaps we are inclined to see too many angles. Long experience in the confessional gives one angles that it is hard for others to perceive. Every individual husband and wife is a microcosm — a little world of feelings and temptations and inclinations and problems. Our job is to get each individual to heaven and to do that by offering the means of grace and the advice that we think will help most in the individual circumstances. When all that has been said, we can still agree with the statement that there are selfish husbands who have little consideration for their wives. It works the other way around too at times. All we can do is to keep hammering away at the importance of unselfishness in marriage for the benefit of those who are selfish — husbands and wives both. Surely if we fail to give adequate consideration to all the angles of the problems presented to us, THE LIQUORIAN should go "into the trash can." But we shall always be trying to save immortal souls.*

The editors

In God's Hands

"I hope discussion in regard to the article on rhythm in *Sideglances* in your January issue is not closed, for I would like to add my two cents' worth. It has struck me forcibly in the last few months that the general attitude toward the use of rhythm is becoming a very dangerous thing. It is not only that many Catholics seem to soft-pedal the grave warnings that rhythm is not to be used except for serious reasons, nor even that many who realize the gravity of the matter rationalize madly in their efforts to justify their own use of rhythm, though, heaven knows! these things are distressing enough. But there is a further lack of understanding that to me (and, may I add, to my husband) seems deplorable. It is simply this: almost nobody seems to realize that to place one's trust entirely in God, to leave the entire matter of conception or no conception in His hands, is thrillingly rewarding on both the supernatural and the natural plane. In the first place, it seems very foolish for us to think that we could possibly know better than God when would be the best time for us to have or not have children. In the second place, when our dependence on God's will is complete, the graces He grants us to carry out whatever plan He has devised for us, whether it is easy or hard, never fail us. In the third place, with our anxieties and tensions at rest in His will, our emotions find more perfect and satisfying release and our affection grows naturally toward a more perfect unity. Now, just

lest someone think that we speak from a fortuitous happenstance of two or three widely spaced children, let me remark that we have five children, the last three of whom are a year and a half apart. Furthermore, that our financial situation for the last four years (until very recently, in fact) was crucial, nor has my health been perfect. My only worry, now that our youngest is almost five, is that I may be getting too old to have another child . . . but that too, being in God's hands, is less a worry than a small sigh for vanished youth. In any case, I would highly recommend to married couples being generous with God. Try it — you will find that you cannot even begin to match His generosity.

Evanston, Illinois

S. G. N."

It Takes Plenty of Faith and Ambition

"I am not an eloquent writer but I hope to put a few things across. I am a convert and the mother of eleven children. Both my religion and my children are a source of extreme happiness and satisfaction to me. Even at the age of 35 and with eleven children I do not say that this eleventh one is my last. I can not understand how many Catholics can be so sure that this is the last and make it so—and still be practicing their religion. But let me not judge them. Rhythm has never worked for me. After every child I would always think I would like another baby in six years, and as usual another one arrived years ahead of the dreamed-of schedule. Oh, yes, we are still hurting from remarks like "should have our hearts cut out — should be disinherited — priests don't know anything about raising families" and from sneaking, anonymous letters. So many times I was mute for an answer. But we have not lost our happiness. My husband works with non-Catholic men who have no respect for their wives nor God nor religion. The smart

man is the man with two children in sixteen years instead of eleven in sixteen years. But this just makes us stronger in our faith — and may we never fail! No, it's no picnic! We do not have a lovely new house with fancy trimmings, but we do have a home with laughing and loving children, with serious moments of prayer and the family rosary (sometimes with a spat to quiet the smaller ones). No one knows how many prayers it is taking. I do not have time for social activities day in and day out. I will admit that sometimes I wish I could do something just once for myself, but it never lasts long. I do my share when asked to help by the PTA and Altar and Rosary Society and other community projects. I also attend as many meetings of these bodies as possible. Oh, yes, it takes plenty of faith and ambition — not 'namby-pamby' religion, not just praying when you want or need something, but praying daily and often every day. We all make sacrifices. With this many children we are not invited out for dinner too often, but we are having fun as a family and loving our responsibilities too. Another advantage of having a large family is that we do not have time to gossip or 'stick our nose' in other people's business because we are too busy with our own problems. But I do take time to help others when I can. The biggest problem all of us must face and solve is getting God and religion into our lives.

Illinois

E. M."

How About This Noise?

"I have reached the age of 25, wifehood, motherhood (three and soon to be four) and am just now moved to write my first 'fan' letter. I can't think of a more appropriate start than to those who spread and interpret the message of God on earth. I have been a subscriber for three years and have been angered, aroused, humbled, amused, doubtful while reading

your magazine, but on the whole well satisfied. My varied opinions and reactions in regard to THE LIGUORIAN have been and most probably will remain thought-provoking, soul-searching and altogether very stimulating. It has proven so to many of my friends also. The article *In Defense of Children* was something really needed in view of all the things we are reading in the secular press about 'too many children being born in this era' while many who should be having children are giving up such a pleasure in order to better themselves for the benefit of the human race, etc. etc. How about this noise? It has been proving most disturbing and causing much comment—no room, no schools, no food and the land scarcity! Are we headed for a China or Japan population concentration? Please don't let us mothers down and please, please, keep up the common sense principles which you have been presenting so well.

Ohio

Mrs. M. E. H."

Pressure on the Home Front

"I would like to have you discuss the morality of the following situation. My child comes home to me and says, 'Sister in school said everyone was to bring a quarter for the missions. She said we were to earn it by charging our little brothers and sisters to watch television.' Said I, 'How do you expect to get them to pay you?' 'Don't be stupid, mother. I'll beat them up.' Needless to say this executive never did get set up in business. Father, I'm not a strong Catholic. At the first touch of the whip I might renounce my faith, but I'm trying to raise my children in the faith, and yet I've reached the point where, as a mother said to me, I feel like praying that I never live to see another Lent, if it brings the disension in our home which this Lent has brought. Dinner has turned into a constant battle over the mission money. Each

morning the older children leave home angry and rebellious. The little ones are crying. Their dad goes to work crushed, feeling he's a failure because he hasn't got it to hand out. Your answer will probably be: 'Sister doesn't mean it that way.' But Sister says it that way. If you bring a dollar, no homework! If you can buy your way out of homework for one dollar, why is it necessary in the first place? It isn't only the mission money; it's the Christmas cards, it's the magazine drive and a host of other things. It seems to me that if to finance our schools the home must be kept in a constant turmoil, we might do better by limiting our schools to the rich and let us poor folks with a raft of children keep our faith by saying the rosary as our ancestors did.

N. N.

D. R."

• *Catholics are expected to make a reasonable and prudent effort to contribute to the support of the parish — the church, the pastor, the school, the Sisters. Sometimes the element of sacrifice must be added to the effort of contributing. Catholics are also supposed to contribute to the work of the missions and to do their share to help along the projects carried on by their children in school. But there is NO obligation to do the impossible or to give in to pressure to do what is obviously unreasonable. The situation described in this letter does not, we believe, give a broad picture of what is going on in our Catholic schools generally. On the other hand it is by no means a case that stands all by itself. Sisters are human, and they can be carried away by a well-intended but misguided zeal in their effort to help the missions, to have their particular class or their school excel all others in their giving to the missions and in selling Christmas cards, etc. If, in the prudent and calm opinion of the parents, such a situation develops, it is time to go to Sister and have a talk with her. This will give both Sister and the parents the*

opportunity to present their case. If such matters, in a particular parish, are to be taken up with the pastor, then he is the one to speak to. Sometimes it may be better for the parents to discuss this matter amongst themselves as a group and to have the matter presented to teacher or pastor or PTA meeting through selected members of the parent group. Very often a calm approach and discussion of a problem like this in the manner suggested will solve or at least alleviate the difficulty.

The editors

In Defense of Children

"As a teen-ager I particularly appreciated the article *In Defense of Children* in the March issue. You put the problem of delinquent children into a different light, neither placing the blame completely upon the teen-agers nor on the parents. It is, rather, due to the atmosphere created by a not-so-Christian family condition which in turn results from the present social conditions. Other factors, along with scandal, bad example and lack of parental interest in their youngsters' activities can only help along in the development of the "mixed-up kids." If the day ever comes when God grants me a family, I hope that I will apply those points in the article in accordance with Christ's teachings.

Little Falls, Minn. Miss R. A. W."

The Rewards of Marriage

"May I make an observation on the letter written about the rewards of marriage? Your answers were, of course, all true, but might not have been what the writer was looking for. I was in the same situation, having had four children in four years of marriage. The adjustment to a husband, children and the almost constant state of pregnancy is too great to make in a matter of months or even a

year or two. My solution was quite simple, actually. I decided that since the Lord made the marriage act a part of marriage, then He had to help. So I offered up—made a real offering—of the marriage relation to our Lord. I also offered up particular unpleasant parts of the housework. It worked. God helped me more than I can tell. Now I have been married six years and am pregnant with my fifth child and I am really happy. I am adjusted to housework, husband, children and pregnancy. I wish that someone had told me that you don't become a wife and mother in actuality just by pronouncing the marriage vows. I also wish someone had told me how much God will help you to perform your duties lovingly and willingly if you really ask Him. Colorado

Mrs. H. W. Z."

Prescription for Family Peace

"The article *Sacredness of Supper* under Pointed Paragraphs caught my eye and interest. May I say that I readily agree with the writer. In my own family, the meal became nothing but an essential. We were like machines, and eating was only a process of refueling. We had indeed forgotten that it was an imitation of the Last Supper as well as of the Mass. As a result, our family ties weakened, and we found we were drifting apart. Finally, we became aware of what was happening and took steps to correct it and to restore the Christian ideal of bread-breaking. As a result of making a special effort to be united at the main meal, the bonds that bind us together have become even closer. I think this will work for any family that tries it.

Winona, Minn.

Miss K.S."

• *Such an attitude manifests an effort to practice true family charity, and where there is charity, there also is Christ, the head of the home, the unseen guest at every family meal.*

The editors

Are You Influenced by Human Respect?

Many people do not understand what is meant by the expression, "acting through human respect." Here is a practical explanation of the expression.

LIKE many terms that can be used to express moral qualities, human respect is a term that can be given a good and a bad meaning.

In the good sense, human respect means a reasonable regard for the opinion and estimate that good people have of us. In this sense it can be a safeguard of virtue, a help to charity and a means of avoiding undue singularity of habit and action.

In the bad sense, which is the sense in which it is usually used, human respect is the habit of being more concerned over and more directly influenced by the opinions and views of other human beings than by the commands of God and the requirements of religion and virtue.

The victim of this kind of human respect allows the opinions of others to push and bully him around; to drag him into sin; to deafen his conscience. The only thing that matters to him is to please others, to get them to nod and smile with approval, to keep them from saying anything that

PETER J. MICHELOZZI, C.S.S.R.

will hurt his reputation as being one of the crowd of regular fellows.

This is the kind of human respect we are talking about in this article.

SOCIAL GATHERINGS

SOCIAL gatherings are fertile fields for the haunting vice of human respect. We can see it at work in the man who is all smiles and a perfect "yes-man" while his companions are telling a positively rotten story, or smearing mud on another man's reputation, or slapping the name of God or Jesus Christ into every sentence for emphasis. He knows that he should show resentment at the filthy story and the gossip and the misuse of God's name. But he is afraid to show opposition because the others might think he is a "good guy."

Human respect compels some men to keep on drinking at a party even though they know they have had enough, because they feel that if they

push their glass aside, they won't be part of the gang any longer. Human respect makes an early-morning hunter or fisherman miss Mass on Sunday because the others in the group would think him foolish if he insisted on such a crazy thing.

Human respect makes the teenager hang around with companions who drink and steal and play fender-tag and throw rocks at street-lamps, because he fears that otherwise he won't be one of the pack. Human respect makes a girl give in to the sinful advances of a boy because she doesn't want him to think that she is not a "good kid."

IN THE HOME

"What others might think" is a rule of conduct that causes much unrest in the home. It can keep a wife nagging at her husband to get a new car, paint the house, or buy a new dining room set just like the people next door bought because "we can't let them think we haven't got the money." And so they keep up with the Joneses and the Smiths all right, but at the price of heavy debts, sleepless nights, continual squabbles and constant unrest in the home.

Human respect urges mothers to encourage their young teen-agers to "go steady" so that the neighbors will see how popular their child is. Meanwhile they close their eyes to the occasion of sin in which they place their popular child. Human respect is sometimes the reason why parents discourage their children from following a vocation to the priesthood

or religious life. They are afraid people will think their son or daughter went to the seminary or convent because they could not make a go of it in the world.

But the deadliest evil that human respect causes in the home is to compel the husband and wife to practice birth control. They are afraid to have more than two or three children because their relatives and neighbors might pity them and laugh at them.

AT WORK

ALMOST everyone has seen human respect motivating people in their conduct at work. Lunch time rolls around. Four or five employees head for the corner restaurant. They order meat. The Catholic among them remembers that it is Friday, but he's afraid that he will look foolish if he orders fish or eggs. So it's meat for him, too.

The boss is out for the day. A little card game in the locker room is suggested by Joe's buddies. He knows it is wrong to waste big chunks of company-paid time; and they do add up to large sums. But he can't let them think he's a kill-joy, can he? Sure he'll play!

Or maybe Joe's fellow employees are juggling the account books or time records; or stealing valuable supplies or equipment from the shop. He is invited to get in on the easy haul. Poor Joseph! He wants them to think he is a nice guy; so with guilty fingers he grabs his share of the loot. But inside he feels sick because he can't get the seventh commandment out of his head. Well, at

least the fellows still think he's a regular guy, even if God doesn't.

IN CHURCH

HUMAN respect is so sneaky and so deeply rooted that it can creep into every phase of our lives. It operates even in church. Some men are ashamed to be seen holding a prayer book or a rosary in their hands while attending Mass. It makes them look too pious, they say. Others will refuse to enter the confessional or kneel at the Communion-rail week after week, for the same reason. But when the Holy Name Society or the Fathers' Club has Communion Sunday, they string along with the crowd because what would people think if they didn't?

Some people have the white carpet rolled out and all the lights in the church blazing away for the wedding of their children, to make sure that others will see what good Catholics they are. But the only other time they enter the church is at their funeral when they are wheeled in and when their children will be present to keep up the family tradition of showing others what good religious people they are.

* * *

TO live by human respect, to let our conduct be influenced and guided by the opinion of others is to be a weakling. We are led around by the nose, we bend over backwards — to please others and to gain their approval. We build our life on the opinion of others and that opinion can change overnight. We are not free because we are slaves to human respect.

But even worse than this, human respect can lead us to eternal unhappiness. To be a nice guy at all costs . . . popular . . . one of the boys . . . one of the girls, we must pay a steep price. Many times only a mortal sin will do. Sure, we may have the flattering finger of human opinion pointing to us with approval, but at the great get-together on judgment day we may hear the voice of God saying to us: "I know you not."

SICK CALL

Years ago, a traveller lying ill and in danger of death at a Dublin hotel sent for a priest. It was a stormy night, but through the wind, rain and muddy streets the priest came and administered the last sacraments to the sick man.

The landlord, a Protestant, pleasantly invited the priest into his own room to have some refreshment before going back into the storm. Then by way of conversation the landlord began to talk of the higher Catholic clergy and their comfortable life.

"Now, for instance," he said, "while you were walking through all that rain and mud, I'm sure the Cardinal was enjoying his pleasant fire and his punch."

The priest smiled:

"I'm afraid you have a wrong opinion of the Cardinal."

"Why?" asked the man.

"Because, my friend, I am Cardinal Cullen."

Redemptorist Record

•

He whose head is easily swelled often finds himself in tight places.

For Wives and Husbands Only



Donald F. Miller, C.S.S.R.

The Evil of Sterilization

PROBLEM: There is a great deal of talk among my married friends about the frequency with which sterilization operations are being performed today, and, among those who have little or no religion, about the advantages such operations have for taking the responsibility out of marriage. Does the Catholic Church forbid such operations in all cases?

SOLUTION: Not only the Catholic Church, but the eternal natural law of God prohibits as a most grave sin any attempt of any individual to make himself (or herself) sterile, or any consent to an operation directly designed for that purpose. The fifth commandment of God, representing the natural law, reads: "Thou shalt not kill." Included under this commandment is the obligation of every human being to maintain the essential integrity of his body, and to permit no mutilation or destruction of an important human faculty or organ or power. No one can doubt that the generative powers of sex are an important part of the make-up of human beings. God's law is seriously violated whenever anyone deliberately and directly reduces them to impotence.

We say "directly," because operations on the human body that result in sterility are not sinful if the direct and im-

mediate purpose of the operation is to save the life of the individual by removing or treating a diseased organ. Thus the removal of cancer-infected ovaries or uterus in a woman is not sinful because the sterility is an indirect effect of the necessary treatment of a disease.

It is never lawful, however, for a husband or wife to have themselves directly sterilized because there is danger, great or small, in the wife's becoming pregnant. Therefore such operations commonly known as "ligating the Fallopian tubes," or unnecessary removal of healthy ovaries and/or uterus, or being outfitted with a "diaphragm," or (for a man) vasectomy, are serious and terrible violations of God's law. If the mutilation can be repaired, there is an obligation to have this done as soon as possible.

PERSONS who have submitted to irreparable sterilizing operations or treatments need not despair of God's mercy, but they must be keenly aware that they owe a tremendous debt of reparation for such a far-reaching sin. They should want to do lasting penance, and accept the suffering that God will surely send them in a spirit of most humble and contrite sorrow that is proportionate to the lasting effect of their sins.

Father Nicholson, the famous Redemptorist, once said at a retreat:

"You can make an impression on the modern world by being a saint, or by being eloquent, and from what I've seen of you gentlemen, I advise you to be eloquent."

Arnold Lunn

MOST BELOVED

There is no person in history who has been so much loved as Jesus Christ.

THIS is not a pious reflection, but a matter of exact historical fact. If it were only a pious reflection, it would be a nice thing to say; but to list it as an historical fact, in a class with the discovery of America and the Declaration of Independence, that is something which no doubt many persons will find hard to believe.

Objections leap to mind. As a matter of strict history, Christ Himself seems hardly the kind of character to qualify as the "great lover" of all time. He seems too meek and mild, too pious, too churchy, too much the conventional preacher type.

Much might be made of these objections touching the personality of Christ, it is true; and it would be interesting to go into them to see what answers can be made.

For now, let us keep to the original statement, the alleged historical fact, that Christ has had more real lovers than any other character in history.

That is indeed the fact; and the record bears it out.

RAYMOND J. MILLER, C.S.S.R.

There has been no one in all history, ancient or modern, sacred or profane so much loved as Jesus Christ.

No one has been loved by so many, so really, so intensely and unreservedly, so faithfully, and with such extraordinary effects, as Jesus Christ.

No one has been loved *by so many* as Jesus Christ.

Does anyone have some possible rivals to suggest for the distinction? Among the great names of history, the noble souls, the conquerors and kings, and even the "great lovers" of history (ancient or modern, sacred or profane) is there any that can be put forward to challenge this claim of Jesus Christ? Benjamin Franklin? George Washington? Dolly Madison? Julius Caesar or Napoleon? Rudolf Valentino? Or among the renowned religious leaders, is there any who still has human beings madly in love with him? Martin Luther? Buddha? Mrs. Eddy? Confucius? Mohammed? Brigham Young?

No; there is no competition. Merely to make the suggestion, or to attempt to muster rivals for the honor, turns out to be a ridiculous farce. No individual in history has heard from so many, so often, so continuously, in so many different languages, dialects, and accents, the tender words of love as He has: "JESUS, I LOVE YOU!"

Yes, the words have been repeated countless times, in joy and sorrow, in grief and glory, in the dark and in the blaze of heavenly revelation. But still the doubt will come to mind: is this the *real* thing? Are the people who say it, granted that they number in the millions, really honest about it? Or are they taking refuge in the words as a way of finding relief? Like medicine or taking to drink?

HERE was an old nun in a home for old nuns where the writer once had the privilege of hearing confessions every week. She had had a stroke, and was unable to go to the chapel and make her confession in the confessional like the other healthier sisters. Instead, she would tell her little weekly tale of faults in her own simple room, seated in an old rocking chair, which she rocked quietly but steadily as she talked. The stroke had affected her speech, and her words came out of the side of her mouth in a kind of mumbling way. But there was nothing whatever wrong with her mind. I can still picture her clearly, when the confession was over and I had risen to go, as she looked up at me very shrewdly over her iron-rimmed glasses, and

asked a question or made a comment or two on current events (of local or international import), with a twinkle in her eye and her own delightful touch of dry humor.

In between my weekly visits there finally came another stroke, and in a few days, before I returned, she had died. The sisters who acted as nurses, and others, told me about it when I came; and they did so with a kind of awe. For after the stroke, during the two or three days that she lay dying, the old nun could be heard repeating in a loud voice, so loud as to be heard through the walls of her room and up and down the corridor: "JESUS, I LOVE YOU!"

This was the real thing, no mistake about it. The wise old lady and the fervent old lover of eighty summers who was repeating the words was not taking any second best substitute; she had the real thing, and she knew it; and that is why despite her eighty summers and the wisdom the years had brought (and the disillusionments too) she could repeat as she prepared to leave this world, with the ardor of a girl in love, unashamed, unafraid, with all her heart: "JESUS, I LOVE YOU!"

This is how Jesus Christ is loved, and has been loved for two thousand years; more *really* than anyone else in the world.

He is, and has been, also more *intensely and unreservedly* loved than anyone else in history.

ST. THERESA of Avila (who was a woman of great freedom of speech and extraordinary personal

charm, besides being a saint and a mystic) once said with her usual vividness: "God treats His friends terribly; but 'tis not surprising, seeing how He treated His own Son." (The writer, incidentally, likes to picture St. Theresa as a witty, vivacious Irish-woman, with her "Glory be to God!" that occurs so often in her writings.)

But St. Theresa was right. The Lord does treat His friends *terribly*. St. Joseph of Cupertino was denounced to the Roman Inquisition and spent the last years of his life as a prisoner. St. Gerard Majella, the mothers' saint, was accused of a sordid crime of impurity, and the Lord permitted appearances to be such that his superior, St. Alphonsus Liguori, believed the accusation and imposed a stern penance on his fellow saint. St. Alphonsus himself founded the Redemptorist Congregation and then was driven out of it, expelled from his own congregation, with the sentence confirmed by the pope, and died outside the congregation he had founded.

And not only the saints who are honored upon our altars. There are lovers of Christ who will never have a statue, but who love Him as much as the best of their more famous brethren.

The old mother, for instance, is told that her son has disgraced the family, that he is to die a criminal's death upon the gallows. It is the end of her world; all the hopes of her life lie in the dust. But what does she say? "It is God's holy will. Welcome be the holy will of God!"

This is loving "not in word or tongue, but in deed and in truth." This is loving with intensity that conquers all. And this is the way in which Jesus Christ has been loved for two thousand years.

Intensely, yes; and faithful unto death. There is no one in all history who has been loved by so many *so faithfully* as Jesus Christ.

Sometimes the *faithful unto death* has meant a bloody death at the hands of enemies of Christ. Millions of His lovers have died in this way, when they needed not to die at all, if only they would have given up the folly of their obstinate devotion to Him.

But it is not only the martyrs who have loved Jesus Christ faithfully unto death.

THE poet Shakespeare in his play *Othello* describes a human lover's death. *Othello* is a tragedy; in the last act the stage is strewed with corpses. Othello, a bluff and honest soldier, has been deceived by a diabolical enemy into believing that his wife has been unfaithful. Grief-stricken and despairing, the old soldier feels himself compelled to take her life and smothers her to death upon a bed in that grim last act. The deed is hardly done, however, when the truth comes out. She had not been unfaithful; she was innocent; she did not deserve death at all. There are alarms and excursions and various killings; and finally Othello, with a short sword in his hand, standing over the dead body of his wife, utters these words:

I kiss'd thee, ere I kill'd thee; no way
but this,
Killing myself, to die upon a kiss.

And he plunges the sword into his
heart and falls dead upon his dead
wife.

All very tragic and romantic, to
be sure; and beyond a doubt many a
tear has been shed over that last act
of *Othello*.

But *Othello* is only a story, after
all. It is not true, except in the kernel
of the tragic plot.

In actual fact, for true stories of
lovers who "died upon a kiss," we
must go to the lovers of Jesus Christ.
As a matter of literal historical fact,
there have been millions of them who
have "died upon a kiss."

THE *Roman Ritual* is the priest's
book of rules and ceremonies
and prayers to be followed in the ad-
ministration of the sacraments and
the care of souls. It has chapters on
the Manner of Baptizing, on Com-
munion for the Sick, the Hearing of
Confessions, and others; and one spe-
cial chapter on Assisting the Dying.
It must be remembered that this is a
plain straightforward rule book; the
kind of thing that is ordinarily tech-
nical and dry as dust.

In the part of Assisting the Dying
there are laid down, in sober legal
fashion, the prayers to be said and
the ceremonies to be performed by a
priest at the deathbed of one of his
flock.

Among the ceremonies, one of the
first is this:

The priest offers the sick man an im-
age of our Saviour crucified for him
to kiss;

and later, there is this directive:

As the moment of expiration draws
near, the dying man says (or if he can-
not, the assisting priest or the by-
standers repeat for him) in a loud
voice: JESUS, JESUS, JESUS.

To die upon a kiss! Here it is. Not
something out of a romantic imag-
inative piece of play acting, but an
actual reality that has taken place
millions of times; that still is taking
place; which it is the ambition of
every Christian to make the last act
of his own life; to die upon a kiss of
love for Jesus Christ.

Here again, Jesus Christ stands ab-
solutely alone. There is no other
lover in all history, ancient or mod-
ern, sacred or profane, who has had
so many millions of lovers so faithful
unto death as Himself.

Finally, there is no one in history
who has been loved by so many *with
such extraordinary effects* as Jesus
Christ.

The earthly lover, strumming his
lute beneath his lady's casement win-
dow, gives utterance to his love's
longing to fly through the air toward
that blessed height.

Sadly enough for earthly lovers,
however, the longing is never real-
ized. The law of gravitation refuses
to yield to the ardor of young love,
and both its feet stay planted unrom-
antically upon the ground.

Not so, again, with the lovers of
Jesus Christ. The law of gravitation
does yield, has yielded time and
again, to the ardor of their young
love. With the greatest of ease they
have flown through the air, or walked
upon the water, and done a hundred

other things in defiance of the laws of nature when under the influence of this divine love.

PERHAPS we should insert a parenthesis here, to the effect that the production of these extraordinary effects of the love of Christ is not to be considered a normal part of growth in sanctity here in this world. Some of the greatest saints had a very minimum of these "mystical phenomena" (to give them their technical name). Mysticism and sanctity are by no means exactly the same thing.

It is a fact, however, beyond the possibility of doubt by any objective or scientific mind, that God does give these "mystical phenomena" to some of His lovers. And while they are not of the essence of sanctity for true love of Christ, they may be considered a kind of by-product; or in another sense, some kind of advertising billboard set up by almighty God, just to show the world what the love of Christ and the lovers of Christ are capable of.

The love of Christ in St. Francis of Assisi, for instance, had for its by-product those wounds in the hands and feet and sides of the saint called the *stigmata*: as though he himself had been nailed to a cross; or more correctly, as though the wounds of Jesus Christ had been transferred to the body of Francis of Assisi.

Other saints were given the faculty of bilocation. St. Alphonsus Liguori, while seated in his armchair, a poor old crippled arthritic in Nocera, near Naples, Italy, was at the same time

present at the deathbed of Pope Clement XIV in Rome.

Others had the gift of infused knowledge in various ways. St. Gerard Majella, a peasant with a sketchy elementary education, was found to be a master of theological lore, and could baffle the experts in the field who came to test him. St. John Vianney, the Cure of Ars, could tell his penitents in the confessional their most secret sins before they opened their mouths to begin their confession.

THESE are only a few random examples. Lovers of Christ through the centuries, right down to our own, have been evidence of the fact that no love in the world produces such extraordinary effects as the love of Jesus Christ.

These effects, we repeat, are but the non-essentials, the offshoots or by-products of the love of Christ. But what by-products! And what earthly lover in all history, ancient or modern, sacred or profane, has had a love graced with such extraordinary effects?

Perfection is made up of little things well performed. Thus little acts of devotion, of Christian charity and courtesy, which we are daily called upon to practice, may be trifles, but they are trifles which form the perfect man, and a perfect man is the noblest work of God.

Cardinal Gibbons

THE LIGUORIAN



Thoughts for the Shut-in

At Home and at Mass *Leonard F. Hyland, C.S.S.R.*

THOSE who are confined by long illness to their homes do not in the very nature of things have the opportunity to attend and offer up a real Mass in church. For good Catholics, this represents a genuine privation. They should, of course, understand that there can be no shadow of sin for them in missing Mass when their sickness renders it impossible for them to leave the house. Nevertheless, devout persons will inevitably feel a tinge of regret at times that they cannot join with the congregation of their parish church in this act of public worship.

To such as these it should be a source of consolation to know that they can gain much from offering up a "spiritual" Mass, in the same sense that it is possible to offer up a spiritual Communion.

To do this, let them at a convenient time (for example, during one of the scheduled Mass hours at the parish church) take up a missal in English and read over all or some of the beautiful prayers which are incorporated in the Mass. There is much in these prayers which will offer consolation and encouragement to the shut-in.

There are the repeated reminders of the Saviour's suffering and death as the means of the redemption of the world. There are the references to the martyrs and virgins, the confessors and apostles, who united their sufferings to the sacrifice of Christ. There are the moments set aside for mementoes of the living and the dead. By recalling the names of his loved ones, the shut-in can be made to feel less separated and isolated from the world.

Above all, there are the glowing repetitions of the truth that the greatest privilege of human beings, not spoiled or lessened by sickness or sorrow or even death, is the intimate union with Christ that is effected by faith and charity and sacrifice and Communion. The offering of the spiritual Mass as often as possible will make a shut-in conscious of the priesthood that is his, even though he be a layman, and his power to bring help, in Christ, to a sick and sinful world.

Secondly, the shut-in can, while reading the prayers of the Mass, actually unite himself to priests and lay people near and far who at the time may be offering up the sacrifice of Calvary.

IN A spiritual Communion, one desires to receive God sacramentally, even though that be at the time impossible. Thus one brings Christ spiritually into the heart. In a spiritual Mass, one projects one's will into union with all the Masses that are being said at that particular time. One can be sure that God will accept that intention. There is never an hour of the day or night when Mass is not being offered somewhere in the world. To join oneself in spirit with these Masses is to make oneself an added instrument by which their fruits may be made more and more effective in the world.

Let shut-ins make this their frequent prayer:

O my Jesus, I offer Thee all my prayers, works and sufferings for all the intentions of Thy sacred heart, in union with the holy sacrifices of the Mass throughout the world.

POINTED PARAGRAPHS

A Necessary Devotion

June is the month of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. A few words of comment surely will not be out of place describing the proper setting of this devotion in Catholic life.

The comment is necessary because one can sense a tendency in certain advanced liturgist-writers to belittle and even to speak of eliminating what they term "private devotions" from Catholic life. These extremists (who by no means represent the strong and healthy center of the liturgical movement) manifest a dislike and a mistrust for "emotional" or "sentimental" expressions of devotion.

Devotion to the Sacred Heart has not entirely escaped their criticism, perhaps because its emotional connotation has in some instances been exaggerated.

To put this whole subject in its proper perspective, Pope Pius XII last year issued his encyclical, *Haurietis Aquas*, on the true nature of devotion to the Sacred Heart. We are indebted to Father John McGreevy, writing in the Irish theological monthly, *The Furrow*, for a clear and concise summary of the Pope's teaching in this important document.

The following points are made clear:

1. Devotion to the Sacred Heart is not a secondary or optional form of piety, one which the Church approves, but on which she does not insist.

2. It would be wrong to say that the devotion owes its origin merely to the private revelations of St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, or that it is less suited to the urgent spiritual needs of the Church and the human race at the present day.

3. It would be wrong to say that the devotion to the Sacred Heart is infected with the poison of materialism and superstition, and is a hindrance to attaining an intimate love of God.

The pope proclaims that far from being an optional and second-rate form of piety, devotion to the Sacred Heart can be considered as "the highest act of religion." The faithful in honoring the Sacred Heart of their Redeemer "fulfill a most serious obligation by which they are bound to serve God and dedicate themselves and all they have to their Creator and Redeemer." It must therefore be held by all in the highest honor, and he

who "considers of little value this outstanding gift of Jesus Christ to His Church does a rash and harmful thing and offends God Himself."

Devotion to the Mass should, of course, be first and foremost in the life of every Catholic. Beyond that, he is allowed a certain freedom of spirit in choosing this or that particular devotion, or form of prayer. In his choice he may not, of course, leave out the payment of due honor to the mother of Christ. Nor may he, it is now clear, disregard devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, intelligently and unselfishly practiced. For the Sacred Heart is the "sign and symbol of the love with which God loved us through Jesus, and is at the same time an enlivening of our love for God and man."

Unions under Fire

Probably by the time this paragraph appears in print, much more will be known about the case for and against Mr. David Beck, president of the Teamsters' Union and one of the vice-presidents of the combined A.F. of L. and C.I.O. But enough is known at the present time to call for this statement from the editors of THE LIGUORIAN.

We have through the years, consistently argued for the necessity of unions in American business and industry, as an indispensable safeguard to the rights of laboring men. We have just as consistently recognized and warned against the dangers of the abuse of union power. At the same time we have never neglected to hammer away at the principle that the

abuse of a good and necessary thing does not offer valid grounds for the total destruction of the good thing.

On the basis of these three statements we have this to say about the present situation in the Teamsters' Union.

1. We are 100 per cent behind the efforts of Congress to ferret out every misuse of power and funds on the part of Dave Beck, and 100 per cent in favor of his being prosecuted for any violations either of the law or of the trust invested in him by his union. We sincerely rejoice in the action taken against him, even on the basis of what is presently known, by the national board of the A.F. of L. and the C.I.O.

2. Large though the Teamsters' Union is, and vast though the power of Mr. Beck has been, we maintain that whatever crimes he may ultimately be convicted of do not destroy the essential rightness of the principle of the necessity of unionism. Furthermore, they by no means give anyone a valid argument for saying that "all unions are corrupt," or "all unions must be hamstrung or destroyed." The very action of the national board of the A.F. of L. and the C.I.O. demonstrates that such conclusions would be false and idiotic.

3. Beyond doubt legislation will be proposed in an effort to reduce the opportunities of union leaders to misuse the authority granted to them by workers. Such proposed legislation must be carefully studied. If it is an expression of the views of extreme anti-union legislators, it must be so recognized and defeated. If it calls for

reasonable checks and restraints on those in a position to be tempted to do wrong, without attacking the whole structure of unionism, all sensible citizens will be in favor of it.

4. The most important lesson is for union men themselves. If it turns out that Dave Beck did misappropriate the union's funds, rank and file members of his union, who took no interest either in the elections or the management of their union, must accept some degree of blame. Ordinary union men, down to the level of the smallest local, have an obligation to know what is going on in their union. When they abdicate, the "bosses" and "corrupt cliques" step in. They may not in conscience take the position that some teamsters have already expressed in regard to the Beck affair: "He got us high wages; why should we care what he does with our dues?"

Going Steady

If one were to judge by the "advice to the lovelorn" columns in the daily press, this is indeed a precocious age in which we live. Scarcely a day passes without a garland of letters in these columns from anguished adolescents whose steady dates have in some way caused them poignant pangs.

"I am a 14-year-old-girl," a typical letter reads. "My boy friend and I have been going steady for two years. Last week he took out another girl. This really broke me up. What can I do to win him back?"

Such a letter reflects a fashion of the times: steady company-keeping on the part of youngsters in their early teens. By "steady" we mean one boy and one girl being committed to

each other exclusively, and going out alone together on dates. Fashions are not always right, and it cannot be too often reiterated and emphasized that this is a wrong one. Such a practice is unnatural and dangerous for the youngsters involved, and it reflects short-sightedness and soft-headedness on the part of parents who permit it.

There is certainly a place for steady company-keeping, when marriage is a possibility of the foreseeable future. But this condition is not verified for adolescents under normal conditions until they finish high school. During their early teens one of the necessary factors in their approach to maturity is their entering into continuous group activities. In the give and take of a group, childish and selfish attitudes can be offset, and they begin to understand the concept of social responsibility. To put the matter more simply, youngsters in their early teens are meant to have their good times in groups, and they won't mature properly if they by-pass that experience.

Added to this, of course, is the probability that in such unwarranted company-keeping the sacred and tremendously important sex-drive may easily get out of hand. They are young, their emotions are still unsettled. By putting themselves continually in the occasion of sin, they would have to be more than human to avoid sin.

There is increasing emphasis on the dangers of such steady company-keeping. Catholic high schools have taken the lead in banning it. Cardinal

Stritch summed it up very neatly in his Lenten pastoral to his flock: "Too much familiarity between adolescent boy and girl is dangerous and sinful. Certainly an exclusive association at this age is wrong."

Family Vacation

Fathers and mothers with several small and active offspring perhaps more often than not return from their annual vacation not in a state of refreshment but in one approximating exhaustion. Must it be said that the two words "family" and "vacation" are incompatible?

Catherine de Hueck Doherty, indefatigable worker for the poor and in self-sacrificing Catholic action, thinks not. In her home at Combermere, Ontario, Canada, she has for several years sponsored a family vacation plan which is well worth study and imitation.

Her plan is based on these considerations, that a family vacation should give parents the opportunity to spend some time away from their children during the day, and thus get reacquainted, as it were, with each other. It should bring the countryside, with its thousand marvels, to the children, yet with expert supervision of them when they are enjoying their recreational activities. The free time of parents should provide them with the opportunity to meet other parents at intervals, and to share with them their experiences. Nor should the spiritual be forgotten; in this relaxed atmosphere, the family apostolate can be informally discussed.

All of this Mrs. Doherty and her co-workers try to make available in what they call "Family Week at Combermere." Those interested might write to her for further details on the plan, as well as the summer school of Catholic action which precedes it.

BIGGER AND BETTER?

Progress is wonderful. The old narrow trails where two cars could barely move without colliding are being replaced by splendid wide roads where six cars at a time can collide easily.

Riders' Digest

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LIGUORIAN BINDERS

We have had hard-cover binders made to order for holding 12 copies of THE LIGUORIAN in a single volume. Anyone can insert the issues in the binder. Those who preserve their copies of THE LIGUORIAN for reference will find the binders very handy, with the index always at the end of the December issue. Order binders from THE LIGUORIAN, Liguori, Mo., at \$2.50 each.

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IF YOU CHANGE YOUR ADDRESS

Please notify us promptly of your change of address, giving both your old and new address. It makes it easy for our office if you cut your stenciled address from the rear cover of one of your issues of THE LIGUORIAN and send it in when asking for a change of address. Notify us by the tenth of the month if your copy for that month has not been delivered.

LIGUORIANA

SCRUPLES CAN BE CURED

By St. Alphonsus

Selected and Edited by

John P. Schaefer, C.S.S.R.

A scrupulous conscience is one which, because of slight reasons and with no reasonable basis, is frequently fearful of sin, where actually there is none. For a scruple is accurately defined as a "foolish and unfounded apprehension."

SIGNS OF SCRUPLES

There are four special signs of a scrupulous conscience:

1) *Obstinacy of judgment*: the scrupulous person refuses to heed the advice of those wiser than himself. He seeks advice from many, but refuses to accept any final decision. In fact, the more he hears, the more perplexed he becomes.

2) *Frequent change of judgment* for slight reasons: this becomes a source of disquieting hesitation in action and mental unrest and reveals itself especially in such external activities as the reception of the sacraments.

3) *Mental disturbance* over irrelevant circumstances, which were, or could have been, present in one's actions.

4) Constant *fear of sinning* in everything, contrary to one's own and others' better judgment. The scrupulous person will, therefore, not be content with one assurance of a confessor; but will frequently submit the same action to the same confessor, seeking to determine whether his conscience was free from fault in following the advice given.

REMEDIES

THE following are the remedies to be employed in combating scrupulosity. 1) The practice of the virtue of humility; for all too often scruples have their origin in the vice of pride. 2) Avoiding the reading of such books as will excite one's scruples, or conversation with other scrupulous persons. 3) Do not spend much time in an examination of conscience, especially in matters concerning which one may be particularly disturbed. 4) Avoid idleness; for it is at such times that the mind is most frequently filled with silly fears. 5) Immediate recourse to prayer, imploring the help of God to obey the commands of one's director.

All of these rules can be summed up in this one: to subject oneself completely and without question to the direction and judgment of one's confessor or director. A scrupulous

person should never presume to direct himself. Such is the teaching of all the Fathers, theologians and spiritual masters.

St. Antoninus, for instance, writes: "Scrupulous persons make a serious mistake if they refuse to accept the advice of their superiors and more prudent men in combatting their scrupulosity." A priest-disciple of St. Bernard once came to the saint complaining that he hesitated to celebrate holy Mass because he feared that he lacked faith. St. Bernard told him simply: "Then go and celebrate in my faith."

All too frequently scrupulous persons complain: "I wish that I had a St. Bernard to direct me! My confessor is far from being a saint. I don't dare to entrust my conscience to him!"

St. Antoninus puts this scruple to rest: "If this is your fear or conviction, you are wrong. For you do not commit yourself and your salvation to the hands of a man because he is prudent or exceedingly literate or devoted to you, but because he has been placed over you by God. You are not, therefore, obeying him as a man, but as the representative of God."

Such was the advice, also, of St. Philip Neri to his penitents: "Those who wish to advance in the way of God should obey a confessor as they would God. One who acts in such a manner can feel more than secure in rendering an account of all his actions." This is the soundest of advice: to place implicit faith in the advice

of one's confessor. For the Lord will not permit him to err. Nothing can be more safe for a scrupulous person than to obey the advice of his confessor; nothing more dangerous than to direct himself according to his own judgment.

Scrupulous persons, therefore, should not hesitate to follow blindly the advice and commands of their confessors. For in such matters they are not obeying man. It is as though God Himself is speaking to them. "He who hears you, hears Me; and he who despises you, despises Me." (Lk. 10/16).

In refusing to obey their confessors, the scrupulous can also fall into a number of lesser evils. For they not only endanger the salvation of their souls; their disobedience frequently results in loss of peace of mind, failure to progress in virtue, the loss of mental balance, and even in harm to their bodily health. They can even approach to the very verge of despair — and all because, in their pride, they refuse to subject themselves to the direction of a confessor. We, therefore, plead with scrupulous persons to swallow their pride, to place themselves under the direction of a confessor!

TYPES OF SCRUPULOUS PERSONS

SCRUPULOUS souls usually fall into one of three classifications. Some are disturbed by bad thoughts, always fearing that they have consented to them. Others are concerned over their past confessions, fearful that they have never confessed well enough. And still others are afraid of sinning in everything that they do.

Whether bad thoughts be concerned with matters of faith, purity or charity, scrupulous souls should always remember that it is not bad thoughts that are sins, but *consent* to bad thoughts. They should not hesitate, then, to follow the advice of their confessor: that unless they can be morally certain that they have sinned seriously, they are free from sin. Other learned confessors express this advice in this manner: unless a scrupulous person can swear that he has consented to an evil thought, then he has not sinned.

As to those who are disturbed about their past confessions — whether it be because they fear that they have not confessed all their mortal sins, or because they lacked sufficient sorrow — we can give no better advice than this. Such persons must place complete and unfailing confidence in the advice of their confessors. For if they abandon the remedy of obedience, they cannot be cured.

Those who are afraid of sinning in everything that they do must also blindly follow the commands of their confessor. They must be convinced that in obedience there can be no sin: even should the confessor command them to do something which, to them, may seem sinful.

We sum up this discussion of scruples with this practical conclusion. The scrupulous person must always convince himself that he must obey. Only then will he be able to set aside the irrational fear of his

scruples and act freely. It is not necessary, however, that in each particular instance he form this judgment: namely, that he must despise his scruples because his confessor has commanded it. It is sufficient that he act in opposition to his scruples as a result of a previously formed judgment. For from past experience he knows that such a judgment does exist in his conscience, even though it be obscured by doubts and fears. — In all things, and always, the scrupulous soul must obey his confessor or director.

HOW MUCH FOR AN EYE?

A man, discontented with what he thought his miserable lot, complained of the arrangements made by God's providence.

"God," he said, "gives to other men great riches, and I have nothing whatever. How can I get on in life having nothing to start with?"

An old, wise man heard these words, and he asked: "Are you so poor as you think you are, my friend? Has not God given you strength and youth?"

"I admit that He has; and I can say that I am proud of both my health and my strength."

The old man then took the youth's right hand and said: "Would you have this hand cut off for a thousand dollars?"

"No! Most certainly not."

"Your left hand?"

"Of course not."

"Would you consent to become blind for ten thousand dollars?"

"God forbid! I would not consent to lose even one eye for any sum."

"See, then, what riches the good God has given to you."

BOOK REVIEWS

Thomas Tobin, C.S.S.R.

We recommend that books listed or reviewed in THE LIGUORIAN be purchased at your local bookstore. If you cannot obtain the book in that way, you may write to THE LIGUORIAN for further information.

English in the Liturgy Edited by Charles R. A. Cunliffe

This symposium by English scholars reflects the current opinions on the question of the use of English in the liturgical prayers and sacrifice of the Church. The seven articles deal with Liturgical Languages, Theology and the Language of the Liturgy, the Liturgical Approach, the Traditional Approach, the Problem of Style, Music in a Vernacular Liturgy, and the Conversion of Italy. Interesting and stimulating especially for readers who have enjoyed the recent articles in THE LIGUORIAN on this problem.

(Templegate, \$2.00)

Walk While You Have the Light Arthur Jalbert, M.S.

St. Joseph Capasso, canonized by Pope Pius XII, was known as the Priest's Priest to show his great interest in his fellow priests as well as the saintly example he set for them. Many of his maxims were directed to the betterment of the priestly life. A book that priests will find of great inspirational and practical value.

(Grail Publications, \$2.75)

Martyrs of Nagasaki Frederick Vincent Williams

To most people the name of Nagasaki recalls the atom bomb that destroyed this city in Japan; to informed Catholics Nagasaki means the section of Japan that preserved the faith without priests or Mass for 250 years. A veteran newspaper man and convert, Frederick V. Williams, presents the story of Nagasaki from its first conversion down to its restoration after the atom bomb. A tale of courageous Catholicism well illustrated with photographs.

(Academy Library Guild, \$3.75)

World Horizon Reports

Maryknoll

No. 13 Japan's Population Battle William A. Kaschmitter, M.M.
No. 14 A Brief Survey of Southern Africa Robert J. Cunningham
No. 15 Sisters Carry the Gospel Sister M. Marcelline, O.P.
No. 16 A Thumbnal Sketch of North and Northeast Africa Robert J. Cunningham
No. 17 Catholic Theology and the Human Race Robert E. Campbell, M.M.
No. 18 The Catholic Position in Post-war Japan Leopold M. Tibescar, M.M.

Maryknoll publishes World Horizon Reports "on current topics of world interest, prepared for general readership and background information for use in social study, history and religion classes." This is not the place to attempt detailed reviews of these works. Suffice it to mention that they are carefully prepared books that cover very well the topics chosen. It might be worthwhile to single out *Sisters Carry the Gospel* which furnishes a complete philosophy and practice for the apostolate of sisters in the foreign missions. The technique was developed under the guidance of Bishop Ford of Maryknoll, who contributed so greatly to the theory of the missions. All of these monographs sell for \$1.25 except No. 13 and No. 14 which are \$1.50 each.

(Maryknoll Bookshelf)

All Things Considered

G. K. Chesterton

This book, first published in 1908, contains a good selection of Chesterton's apparently frivolous but deadly serious defense of the common man and the common sense that he uses. Modern Catholic readers who would bypass Chesterton would miss one of the great Catholic writers of our English literature.

(Sheed and Ward, \$3.00)

FOR THE YOUNG**Inside the Ark and Other Stories**

Caryll Houselander

The late Caryll Houselander began her writing career as a contributor to a children's magazine. This book contains delightful stories about animals and children. For the pre-teens.

(Sheed and Ward, \$2.50)

Saints Without Wrinkles

Florence Wedge

A novel title for the sketches of thirteen saints for teenagers! Grouped among the young saints are the martyrs, Agnes and Maria Goretti; the youthful Jesuits, Stanislas, Aloysius and John Berchmans; the warriors, Joan and George; the royal Elizabeth and Casimir plus the simple shepherdess, Germaine Cousin. The tales are written in the language and even the jargon of the teen-ager in such a way as to appeal to their sense of hero-worship. Of value to the middle teen group.

(Franciscan Printery, \$2.00)

Medicine for Wildcat

Robert Riordan

The fictionalized biography of the Italian Dominican missionary, Father Samuel Charles Mozzuchelli, one of the great pioneer missionaries of the middle west. Wildcat is the Indian boy who shares the adventures of the missionary. A well-told story for children over ten years of age. A new volume in the popular series, Catholic Treasury Books.

(Bruce, \$2.00)

Charcoal Faces

Mabel Otis Robison

The children of French fathers and Indian mothers were known as charcoal faces in nineteenth-century French Canada. This volume is a fictionalized story of a young boy who lived in a trading post in the Northwest. Another worthwhile Catholic Treasury Book.

(Bruce, \$2.00)

Rainbow Tomorrow

Nicolete Meredith Stack

Interesting story of a young boy and girl who live on a farm in the Philippine Islands.

(Bruce, \$2.95)

The Donkey Who Always Complained

Francis Beauchesne Thornton

Balo, the donkey, and her ancestors were present at the great moments in the life of the Holy Family and this is her story of the events. A charming tale that captures the spirit of the episodes as well as the local color of the scenes. For the older child.

(Kenedy, \$2.75)

Ladi, the Little St. Bernard

Norah Smaridge

The Little Tree

Katherine Evans

The Poor Little Rich Man

Sister M. Julita, S.S.N.D.

When Jesus Came

Rev. Gerald T. Brennan

Hard-cover colored picture stories for the pre-school child. Excellent.

(Bruce, \$.50 each)

LUCID / INTERVALS



Jones, a bachelor, had visited his married sister and had been shown the new baby. The next day some friends asked him to describe the new arrival.

The bachelor replied: "Well — very small features, clean-shaven, red-faced, and a very hard drinker."

Some army troops were being trained on an extremely tough obstacle course — swimming a raging river, running up a steep hill, scrambling through barbed wire entanglements and climbing a cliff with full equipment.

As they came to the end of the training period, a colonel asked a mountain boy in the company, "How do you like it, soldier?"

"Shucks, suh, it ain't nuthin'," drawled the soldier. "Where I come from we have to go through country like this to get to the barn."

A man on the diminutive side applied at the wharf for work as a stevedore. He was only about five feet in height, and the foreman was dubious.

"We're loading 300-pound anvils into that boat, and a little fellow like you couldn't handle them," he said.

"Try me," the little man said.

So the foreman put him to work. He hustled the anvils aboard all right, and the cargo was nearly stowed when the foreman heard a splash. He ran to the rail and saw the little man struggling in the water.

"Throw me a rope," he yelled as he went under. He reappeared soon and again called loudly for a rope and again disappeared. Once more he rose to the surface.

"If you don't throw me a rope," he yelled, "I'm going to drop this anvil."

Two cowboys were about to leave for a trip to the Arizona desert. One of them was talking to a stranger who had inquired about their equipment.

"My pardner and me are travelin' light. He's takin' nothin' but whiskey in case we get rattlesnake bites."

"And what are you taking?" the stranger asked.

"Two rattlesnakes."

A telegraph messenger boy rushed into the elevator, all in a hurry, pondering the problems of life and the advantages of enlisting in the navy. In fact, he forgot to take his hat off even though there was another passenger — a fussy, middle-aged woman.

She said: "Don't you take your hat off to ladies?"

The boy, who ought to be in the diplomatic service instead of the navy, replied: "Only to old ones, madam."

The mountain lad was very shy. He wanted to marry the girl, but he couldn't bring himself to say the word "marry" or "marriage." After giving the problem much thought, he asked the girl in a whisper one evening: "Julia, how would you like to be buried with my people?"

Car salesman: "This is the most modern car on the road. Note, if you will, the new dashboard. No pushbuttons!"

Doctor: "I've examined you quite thoroughly, Samuel, and I can't seem to find the basic cause of your illness. However, it might be due to drinking."

Samuel: "Well, I can understand that all right, doc. I'll just come back some time when you're sober."

Amongst Ourselves

Many readers tell us that when they receive their copy of **THE LIGUORIAN** they turn at once to the pages of the **READERS RETORT** department to see from whom and from where we are receiving criticism and expression of disagreement.

We give space in each month's issue to letters from our readers not merely to print the criticism or praise we receive but for a number of other reasons.

The letters that are sent to us help establish a personal contact between the editors and the readers of the magazine, without which our work of writing and publishing would be a rather cold, lifeless and tasteless affair.

The letters in **READERS RETORT** help also to keep up a kind of family spirit amongst the readers of **THE LIGUORIAN** because expressions of opinion honestly made by the members of any particular group ordinarily serve as a basis of better understanding and as a means of drawing the members of the group into a greater unity.

Ordinarily we send a personal reply to letters that are written to us — a task that is handled by four of the editors at Liguori. Sometimes the editors take a packet of letters with them

when they go out to preach a mission or retreat, and they write their replies during the off-hours between preaching and hearing confessions.

Every letter, before it is printed in the magazine, has received a personal reply from one of the editors. Sometimes it may take two weeks or longer to send an answer to a letter we receive because of our schedule of writing, preaching and other work.

Letters which bear no signature and address cannot, of course, receive a personal reply, and we do not publish them unless we believe that their publication and our answer will be helpful to the writer and to our readers.

A challenge in a letter like — "I dare you to print this!" — is no guarantee of publication in **READERS RETORT**, whether the letter is signed or not.

Of course, by far the greater number of letters we receive cannot be published in **READERS RETORT** because of lack of space. But we want to let our readers and **WRITERS** know that we are grateful for the time and effort they spend in writing the letters and notes of criticism, suggestion, praise and thanks which we receive every day.



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